Souvenir of

GLASGOW CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER, 1909.

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Glasgow Convention,

September, 1909.

THE SUBJECTS OF THE ADDRESSES ARE:

"The Church, which is His Body," by *Brother J. Hemery* (Representative of "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society"), London.

"A Tree Planted by the Rivers of Water," by *Brother John Edgar*, Glasgow.

"Temptations and Trials," by *Brother T. Smedley*, East Kirkby.

"The Cost of Discipleship," by *Brother J. Hemery.*

"Faithfulness Unto Death," by *Brother J. Lightfoot*, London.

"The Ascent of the Mountain of God," by *Brother John Edgar.*

"The Acceptable Time of Jehovah," by *Brother W. Crawford*, Glasgow.

"The Preservation of Indentity in the Resurrection," by *Brother John Edgar.*

"Finally, My Brethren," by *Brother J. Hemery.*

"Overcoming," by *Brother J. Glass*, Manchester.

"The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet," by *Brother J. Hemery.*

Preface.

Dear Brethren,

The addresses contained in this *Report* proved so helpful to those of us who had the privilege of hearing them, aiding us in gaining a still clearer understanding of the *nature* and *purpose* of our sacrifice as foot-step followers of our dear Lord, that we greatly desire that these same blessings should reach you all, that you may rejoice with us.

Although some of these addresses were delivered at other Conventions, we have, for the sake of convenience, included them all under the one cover.

All of the addresses were specially revised for this *Report* by the dear speakers themselves; but our thanks are due to certain dear Sisters for kindly supplying stenographic notes of some of them, thus helping the speakers to recall to memory the thoughts expressed.

One of the addresses delivered by Brother John Edgar at this Convention, was on the subject of the Great Pyramid in Egypt. Instead, however, of reporting this address as delivered, we thought it might prove of greater benefit if we gave a separate and more particular account of our recent work at the Great Pyramid. My brother and I are, therefore, bringing out a second part, entitled "*The Pyramid Report*," the subject-matter of which will be based upon our letters written home from Egypt and Palestine, and already extensively circulated and read by the brethren in Great Britain and elsewhere. This second portion of the *Report* will contain many reproductions of our photographs of important parts of the Pyramid, principally of the interior: and also of other places in Egypt and Palestine, most of which have direct bearing upon the subject of the Pyramid.

These Photographs, in addition to the descriptive printed matter, should prove helpful and instructive, by assisting to a clearer understanding and appreciation of the great spiritual truths taught by our Heavenly Father in his *Word*, and further confirmed by him in his wonderful *Stone Witness* in the land of Egypt. *(See detailed announcement at end of this* Report.*)*

Special thanks are due to our dear Brother Hannah of Glasgow, for drawing the designs for the Covers of both parts of this *Report*, and also for executing many of the line drawings in the second part.

We send out this *Report*, believing that the Lord's blessing will go with it, and praying that you may all receive as great spiritual benefit through its perusal, as we ourselves have had in its preparation.

Your loving brother in the Lord's service,

224 West Regent Street,
Glasgow, Scotland.

Morton Edgar.

The Church, which is His Body.

(By Brother J. HEMERY.)

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1: 22, 23.)

THE relationship of the Church to Jesus Christ its Head, is the "mystery of godliness," as the anti-christian system is the "mystery of iniquity" (Col. 2: 2; 2 Thes. 2: 7). In order to come to an accurate knowledge of the mystery, we need the aid of the Holy Spirit; indeed, we cannot even *begin* to get an understanding unless we have consecrated ourselves to God (Rom. 12: 1), and have been quickened to spiritual knowledge by the indwelling of the Spirit. Let us wait upon the Lord to-night, seeking Him with the whole heart that we may be led into all Truth concerning this mystery; and as the Truth comes to us, let it move us to a closer walk with God and to a closer bond with our altar of sacrifice. Hidden from ages and from generations, the mystery was revealed to the Apostles for the Church at large; it was confirmed unto us by them that heard. It is therefore our privilege to expect the clear light now due, and to know the things which belong to our individual salvation, and also those things which belong to the salvation of the Church in this time of her deliverance.

There are various views of the Church, for in this important matter, as in almost all others which concern the faith and practice of the Church, Truth has been turned upside down (Isa. 29: 16), and darkness has been put for light. The Roman view of the church is the one which approximates most closely to the true ideal, as might be expected from a counterfeit. It claims that the church of Rome is the Church of Christ, a mystic body, controlled by a head. Its head, however, is not Christ, but is the Pope, who claims that he is the vicar of Christ. The followers of the Roman Catholic church are not members of the church, but are its children—again an anticipation of the truth, but a poor counterfeit of that glorious time when the true Church will be in power, and when her children will be multiplied throughout the earth; when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord," and when righteousness will be established in all the earth. The view of the church of England is much the same, save that the reigning monarch is head of the church. The general view of Non-conformity is quite different. It declares that all the saved are members of the Church of Christ, no matter whether they have been matured Christians who have sought to mortify their members which are upon earth, seeking only the will of God, or have been such as the thief on the cross with the last breath crying out for the mercy of God.

Since the commencement of the "time of the end," God has been letting in light on the gross darkness which has obtained so long, and gradually there has been a clearing away of much mist on all things concerning the will of God. Gradually the fact has been made clear that God has not been attempting the conversion of the world, and that the "Gospel Age" has been intended for the gathering out of a people known as "the Church of God," and as "the Church of Christ." But the full light did not come till the "due time," and then God favoured our dear Brother Russell with a renewal of the true light on the purpose of the age, and on the calling and selection of the Church.

When again presented to the Church about 30 years ago, once again came the revelation of the relationship of the "head" and "body," of the suffering of the body with the head, that "if we suffer with him we shall be glorified together" (Rom. 8: 17); and once again came the realization that the Church is the appointed complement of the Christ, to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. (See Heb. 3: 14). Others have seen something of the oneness of Christ, have

discerned that the Church is a gathered-out company, but few have seen clearly the oneness which brings the relationship so close as is that of the body to its head. We have rejoiced in this union with our Lord for many years, and this oneness of our calling has been the bond of love, which has held us in a loving union stronger than any of the bonds of creed or of any earthly tie; we have seen the glory of the High calling, and together we have hoped for it, desiring to be made partakers of the "Seed of Abraham" that we might, as the seed, "bless all the families of the earth."

But now, even a closer association with our Lord is being made clear to us. We see a deeper meaning in the permission to bear the name of Christ, in sharing his reproach, and in filling up that which is behind of the sufferings, the affliction, of Christ, and more than we have seen in "dying" with him. We see more clearly that our death is counted in with his death on behalf of his own people and on behalf of the world; that in bearing his shame, being conformed to his death and suffering with him, means the closest association with him in the things he suffered at the hands of the powers of evil. We see that, while all the merit is in our Lord, the Church, as body to him her head, is considered as part of the "Anointed," both in the present suffering at the hands of an evil world, and in the glorification which is to come. All this is a clearer conception of truth long held, and for it we thank the Lord, for it is proving a very special help in a time of trouble, and is aiding us to bind the sacrifice to the altar as *nothing else* could do.

Some of our dear brethren do not see eye to eye with us in this clearer conception. They agree that the Church is an elect class, but prefer to think of it as a body in itself, a body of chosen ones called "the body of Christ" as if one spoke of a body of men. They fear the thought of associating the Church in the death of Jesus. They prefer to think of the Church as called to fidelity *unto* death. That death is a *necessity*, because the Church cannot inherit its glory in heaven unless it is divested of the human frame, which it willingly sacrifices for the greater glory of a spiritual body. But association with Jesus in being counted as having any share whatever in the Sin-offering of the anti-typical Day of Atonement, is repudiated. We confidently hope that our examination of the Scriptures to-night will help many to see that the Scriptures show the closest relationship of the Church with its Lord in the sufferings of Christ, in sharing in the likeness of his death, in being "immersed into his death,"—dying because of sin not its own, that it may follow Him by the new and living way into the Most Holy, there to be accepted in him as part of the great offerings in this great Day of Atonement. I speak for myself, and also, I know, for very many of you who are present, when I say this clearer view is a most precious thing; that by it we have been drawn more closely to our Lord, and that we are made more ready to lay down our lives for any purpose to which God may use our poor sacrifice.

The calling of the Church, and the close relationship which it was to bear with Jesus, were not at once revealed to the Apostles. The mystery was too great, too important to be disclosed one moment before the "due time." We find no indication of Peter's knowledge of the mystery when he was opening the eyes of his brethren, the Jews, at Pentecost and at that season, though none of his words are opposed to the thought. Nor is there any indication of a knowledge of this mystery of the church in anything which was said by any of the Apostles for a long time after Pentecost. The revelation was to come through one whom God was watching, a vessel chosen from his birth for the service of the Lord. He who had been a blasphemer, and the last to enter the select company of Apostles, was the instrument chosen for the revelation of "the mystery hidden from ages and from generations and now made known." But the moment the revelation came, a flood of light burst upon the Church! They said, "God hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 6). Many of the words of the Lord, hitherto dim, shone with brilliancy. Many of the dark sayings of the prophets stood revealed in beauty, the Church saw their calling as members of the body of Christ, and henceforth they laboured as co-workers with God in a way which before was impossible.

In common with their nation, they had until now looked for an individual as their Messiah, and in Jesus they had found him; but now they saw that Jesus was the first-born amongst many brethren; that he was, as it were, adding to himself, and they rejoiced in their calling. Peter shows his added knowledge when, in his epistle, he says the church is "a holy nation, a royal priesthood," and when he tells that it is to partake of the Christ's sufferings (1 Pet. 2: 2-9). Paul, as is to be expected, speaks in much greater detail. He clearly saw the unity of the Lord and the Church, through the special revelations which he received (2 Cor. 12: 7). He saw the church with the Lord as a temple, each stone of which is necessary for completion of design; as a building (a pyramid probably, with the Lord as the top-stone, to which all the casing-stones are shaped) built up to its top-stone; as the family of God, a

beautiful close relationship of sons to the Father. He likens the church to a bride with Jesus as the bridegroom; and with reference to this declares: "this is a great mystery—I speak of Christ and the Church,"—two are made as one, and counted as one. But closer still he brings the union. The Church is so close to the Lord, and so necessary in the Father's plan, that it is the body of which he is the head. It is the fulness of him that filleth all in all!

Of the various figures which are used, there are three which seem specially appropriate to emphasize the intimate relationship of the Lord and the Church. Paul says (Rom. 8: 17) that the Church is joint heir with Jesus, a very special union in station and dignity. She is bride, with all the honour of that position. The Church is his body, the *necessary* complement of the head.

Now, let us examine some of the Scriptures which speak of the relationship of the Church to its Head. We shall find that in all things which pertain to the office, calling, and glory of the Lord, *the church has a share.*

(1) *Christ,* says Peter, was "the Lamb fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you;" and Paul says that *the Church* was predestinated, or fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, thus showing the purpose of God towards both (1 Pet. 1: 20; Eph. 1: 4, 11). The Church was a fore-ordination of God as truly as was our Lord himself, a revelation which comes with force upon our heart.

(2) *Jesus* is spoken of as "mine elect in whom my soul delighteth;" and Peter says that the Church was "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (Isa. 42: 1; 1 Pet. 1: 2). We see therefore that our Lord was fore-ordained and elect, and that the Church was also fore-ordained and elect.

(3) Our Lord was called in an acceptable time, that he might do the work of God by giving himself as a covenant for the people; and the Apostle Paul applies this same calling to the Church, thus proving that the members of the Church are called to be co-workers with God, being accepted as co-sacrificers in this (Gospel) day of salvation (Isa. 49: 6-9; 2 Cor. 6: 1, 2).

(4) The Scriptures refer to three important Seeds: (a) the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3: 15), (b) the Seed of Abraham (Gen. 22: 18), and (c) the Seed of David (Psa. 89: 35, 36). All of these, we know, refer to our Lord. He is shown to be the Seed of the woman (Gal. 4: 4); of Abraham (Gal. 3: 16); and of David (Acts 13: 23). These names also apply to the Church:—(a) Paul shows that the Church is the Seed of the woman, under whose feet God shall shortly bruise the head of the serpent (Rom. 16: 20; Gen. 3: 15), (b) The Church is the Seed of Abraham—"If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed" (Gal. 3: 29); and (c) in Isa. 55: 3, the offer is made to those who come to Christ, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, to share in the sure mercies of the seed of David, the Davidic Covenant, an offer held out by Paul in Acts 13: 34.

(5) Again, our Lord is to fill the three-fold office of Prophet, Priest, and King:—(a) He is to be a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18: 15); (b) a Priest after the order of Melchisedek (Psa. 110: 4); and (c) a King upon the throne of the LORD (Psa. 2: 6), three glorious offices of Ruler, Helper, and Teacher. These three offices are also allocated to the Church:—(a) At the present time the Church is the repository of the Truth, and it has "the word of reconciliation" as its present ministry (2 Cor. 5: 19), and in the future its work will be to declare the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3: 10, 21). It thus takes the work and the office of the Prophet. (b) and (c) The Church is a Royal Priesthood—kings and priests, royalty in priestly office. See 1 Pet. 2: 9, and Rev. 5: 10—"Hath made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the earth." Thus the Lord and his brethren, the elect, when gathered in and changed, will be that Great Prophet, Priest and King, to rule and bless the earth.

(6) Jesus is the Son of God; but even this title is not held by him alone, for it pleased the Father that Jesus should be the first-born among many brethren. Every mark of pre-eminence is his, in all things; but God is nevertheless bringing through him many sons unto Glory (Heb. 2: 10). He is the first-born; we, through him, receive the spirit of adoption; and if we continue rooted and grounded in the faith, we shall receive the actual adoption into the family of God (Rom. 8: 15, 23). Oh, the glory of our calling! Surely we do not fully realize all that these words mean:—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but . . . we shall be like him."

(7) At his baptism, our Lord "was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power" that he might accomplish his mission (Acts 10: 38). By this he became the Messiah, the Christ, which means anointed (John 1: 41); and by this he was distinguished from all the sons of men. As a token of this, and of the pleasure of the Father, there came the voice to him—"Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Luke 3: 22). Through the Apostle John we learn that the Church also is anointed for her work, and thus, like him, is set apart for the service of God (1 John 2: 27; see also Paul, 2 Cor. 1: 21). Without doubt, the anointing in the ancient days of the priests and the kings of

Israel was intended to portray the anointing of the better priests and better kings who, together in glory, will make the great Priest and King seated upon the Mediatorial throne of the Lord.

(8) Another beautiful connection between the Lord and his body, the Church, is revealed, one which shows the grace and love of the Father towards those who are to be so closely united to his Son, and so closely related to himself. Our Lord said about his work and ministry, "I do always the things which please him (John 8: 28, 29). What a sweet communion is revealed in the words of the Apostle in this connection, perfect harmony between the Father in heaven and the Son upon earth; and how we desire to feel such holy sweet oneness of mind and heart! But see the provision for the Body just in this same connection—Heb. 13: 20, 21—"The God of peace . . . through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work to do his will, *working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight,* through Jesus Christ." The peace and sweet communion which come from the oneness of spirit and endeavour to do the will of God, are ours also, by this Grace of God. That which was provided for the Head, is provided also for the Body. Not only is this the case, but the further oneness of sharing in the resurrection power of God is given to the Church, as well as to the Lord. The resurrection and subsequent exaltation of Christ, were the outcome of the exercise of the almighty power of God. This was the greatest manifestation of God's power which had been made (Eph. 1: 19-23). But this same mighty power is exercised towards the church, as the foregoing passage shows, and as Paul says in Col. 1: 11. "That I may know the power of his resurrection" was Paul's constant prayer; so must it be ours. If faithful to our consecration that mighty power *will* work in us, to transform us and make us into the likeness of our Master, and ultimately to bring us to his kingdom and glory. These wonderful passages of Scripture should take away all doubt, and give us confidence that he who has begun a good work, will confirm it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

Thus we see that our Lord and the Church share in the fore-ordination, election, and anointing of God. That both share in the power of the Holy Spirit towards works of holiness; and that together they are called to be the great Prophet, Priest, and King, to teach and bless the people. What, then, does all this mean, what does it signify? Surely it means that in the office and work of our Lord, the Church has a share. That the Christ, the anointed is not only our Lord Jesus, not *one member,* but *many.* As we have said, in all things *he* has the pre-eminence; but the very fact that the Apostle required to remind us that our *Lord* was pre-eminent, shows the very close relationship of the Church to the Lord. Had there been no possibility of the thought of equality, the Apostle would not have mentioned the pre-eminence of the Lord, the expression would have been a superfluity.

A consideration of the words of our Lord and of the Apostles will show, that it is not only when glorified, that the Church will share in the offices and in the work of the Christ, but that it shares now as his "body," while yet upon the earth, filling up that which is behind. There are two chief features of our Lord's work and ministry: first, his coming into the world to die as its Redeemer; and secondly, the witness to the truth which he gave, and which became the cause of his death at the hands of his enemies. The first is expressed by Heb. 10: 5—"a body hast thou prepared me . . . lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" the other is contained in our Lord's words to Pilate (John 18: 37). Our Lord was before Pilate at the time, and was revealing to him and others all that he thought it was necessary that they should know about his work and kingdom. Pilate said: "Art thou a king, then?" The question brought a political aspect into the case. Jesus acknowledged that he was a king, and added, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," evidently meaning the Truth of the king and the kingdom.

Did our Lord finish all the work of the Christ from God's point of view, all that God contemplated when he sent his anointed into the world? It is clear that Jesus was faithful in his work, for we have that testimony in Heb. 3: 1, 2. His own words are, "I have finished the work thou gavest *me* to do." But we have no hesitation in saying that Jesus did not accomplish all the work of planting truth in the world, nor did he suffer the complete measure of the sufferings of the Anointed. He was God's Apostle (Heb. 3: 1), and as such he witnessed to the Truth; but that there was a further work to do is shown by his appointing twelve *other* Apostles to carry on the work which he began. He himself said: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17: 18). The wonderful words spoken to that little company in the upper room on that last night of their fellowship, when Jesus gave to them their commission and the treasures of the truth, may be compared to the time when our Lord was with the Father in glory, receiving His words before he left

that glory to come down to us. How sweet and hallowed was that time of sacred fellowship in the upper room, and what wonder that our Lord's words that night are the most precious treasure of the Church!

Jesus came, then, (1) To redeem the world by giving himself as its ransom price; and (2) To give witness to the Truth; to plant in this apparently barren soil that seed of truth which, in the Father's due time, would spring forth before all nations (Isa. 61: 11). The faithful witness he gave cost him his life. The people were not prepared to accept him and his message; but when the end came he had the assurance that he had pleased God, he had finished his work. But what of the Church? Our Lord's words just quoted show that the Church has the same work of witnessing: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world;" and the faithful witness costs the Church her life, for the world hates her even as it hated him. The Lord came to die and to witness,—the Church is sent to witness, and the witness costs her her life. Here, then, in the most sacred and solemn features of our Lord's work, the Church, his body, is brought into close association. The death of our dear Lord was accompanied with every evidence of shame and disgrace; rejected and despised of men, and forsaken by God. The prophet had foretold that he would "die with the wicked" (Lowth's Translation); but little this told of the cruel fierceness of the literal fulfilment, as our Lord was crucified between the thieves. Even the sun hid its light as the dear Lord died in shame.

The legitimate heir of all of Adam's rights, heir also of all that God had promised to Israel through the Law Covenant, and heir therefore to life, he was willingly taking the Sinner's place, bearing his condemnation; giving up every earthly right as the world's ransom price, that he might become its Deliverer. Accounted the Sinner, he became subject to him that had the power of death; as he said, "this is the hour and the power of darkness." The one man who had holiness and truth fell under death's dominion, and was slain as a sinner. But this was the only way in which he could give his soul an offering for sin, the only way in which God could lay "the chastisement for our peace upon him." Thus our Lord gave himself "a corresponding price for all" (1 Tim. 2: 4). Thus "he tasted death for every man" (Heb. 2: 9).

Now, it is clearly manifested by these and all other Scriptures related, that the Church could not have part in its *own* ransom; therefore, there cannot be any question of the Church sharing with the Lord in that phase of his death. And yet, the Church is "baptized into his death." It "suffers with him," that it may be glorified with him. The death of the Church at the hands of the world is an appointment of the Father, as was our Lord's death (Acts 2: 23), for they are his sheep, *appointed* for the slaughter, for sacrifice (Psa. 44: 22). They must be beheaded for the witness of Jesus (Rev. 20: 4), not necessarily meaning, however, that each must suffer a *violent* death, but that each *must* suffer death, not only of the human will, but also of the body. In a word, they suffer with him in the appointment unto sacrifice, in the shame of the sacrifice, and are counted as partakers of the sufferings of Christ. With him they die under the power of death, bearing the stigma of the cross.

When the Lord was on his last journey to Jerusalem he was met, you remember, by the mother of John and James, who together asked the Lord for seats near him in the Kingdom. The brothers were now grown men, but the mother still had a fostering but selfish care for her sons. The Lord assured them they did not know for what they were asking. None could get into the kingdom save by the way of sacrifice, by sharing with him in the cup which the Father had poured out for him. He said: "Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said: "We are able." They trusted the Lord, well knowing that he would not lead them into anything too hard for them to bear. He replied: "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matt. 20: 20-23).

Not long afterwards when our Lord and his disciples commemorated the feast of Passover, he took a cup saying: "This is the New Covenant in my blood," and he passed it round that all might share with him. This symbolism must have come as a surprise to the disciples. Forbidden by the Law to drink blood on pain of death, they were now asked in symbol to do that which brought them in condemnation. They drank of the cup; they divided it amongst themselves, and thus they took death unto themselves. Surely our Lord meant them to understand that he was giving them a share in the condemnation and shame which was falling fast upon him! By this they declared their readiness to follow their Master all the way of the cross, though little they knew of their weakness, and of the trials which would beset them.

That which is thus shown of the Apostles is the privilege of the Church. Throughout the New Testament, there is a clear association of the Church

with the Lord in his sufferings, and in his death, an association far beyond that which comes from belief in the word of God concerning him, one indeed which brings us the privilege of filling up that which is behind of those afflictions. In a passage already quoted (Rom. 6: 3) we saw that Paul said that "we were immersed *into* Jesus Christ," and were also "immersed into his death." We die with him, that we may be raised in His likeness. This passage does not merely say that our old man must die, in order that the new man may live; else there would be no need to say the death must be in the likeness of *Christ's* death. We die with him as unto sin, by sin, through sin, that we may be immersed into his death. This is something beyond fidelity *unto* death, it is an entrance *into* death, the blotting out of life. When the holy Jesus died, it was as the victim of sin, which, for the moment, seemed to have the victory. Indeed, he could not have died had sin not been imputed to him, for all the promises of health, prosperity, and life, which were by the Law, were his. The Law said: "The man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Rom. 10: 5), and thus came the necessity for our Lord to be accounted a sinner in order that he might die for the people.

For this reason we do not see that it is possible for the members of the Church to die unless, like him, they are accounted sinners. Justified by faith, they are *freed* from the condemnation of Adam; "Thy sins, which were many, are all forgiven thee," is the sweet word of forgiving grace. Sanctified and counted holy, in Christ, there is now to these "no condemnation," for they walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. These, reckoned holy, and with the spirit of holiness working within, are to drink of our Lord's cup, to share in his sufferings, to be immersed into his death. But death cannot come save by actual sin, or by sin being imputed; and as even their imperfections are covered, it follows that the members of the Lord's body cannot die except, like their Lord, sin is imputed to them. Dying not for our own sin, dying in Christ, buried with him, "reckoning ourselves likewise as dead unto sin," we see the privilege of suffering in a light much clearer than we have hitherto enjoyed. *Now* we understand the *fellowship* of suffering, and the oneness of the glorified head with the body left behind; and we see clearly that all the sufferings of the Christ, the anointed, are in order that both Head and Body may share in the great Sin-offerings of Atonement.

We repeat, that in all this we are not saying that the Church is part of the world's ransom price. Quite a clear distinction is made between bearing sin, suffering death under the power of sin, and the payment of the ransom or corresponding price by the Lord. Each of those who will be found with the Lamb on Mount Zion (Rev. 14: 1), will have had the Spirit which was found in Christ. Not one will be there who would not have given his life for the world, had the opportunity been afforded. Each has longed to bless the world out of which he has been called, and God in his mercy has provided them with a way. Requiring a Redeemer themselves, they could not give their life a ransom for another; but a way was made whereby they yet might suffer—even unto death—following their Redeemer. By his worth and merit accounted to them, they had something to sacrifice; still further, they are permitted to follow him into the Most Holy; and with him, their Head, they are, as his Body, counted in the Sin-offering, as in the days of Israel the goat followed the bullock and was counted in with it as the complement of the day's sacrifices.

In this connection, I often think of Adam and Eve and the Garden, and how, when the dread results of their sin became manifest in the murder of Abel by his brother, they would have been willing to die, if by so doing it were found possible to bring back to their children their former happiness and communion with God. It was not possible. God had already provided his Second Adam, who, in due time, made his appearance, and who, willingly taking the place of the first Adam, entered the deep waters and the darkness of death for the sake of those he loved. He won through, and found his way to the tree of life in the garden of God (Rev. 2: 7). But, now, see *another* figure who stands out from amongst the people. When asked her name, she says, "I am Eve." "But you are not Mother Eve who transgressed?" "No, but I am permitted to take her place, and to share with the *Second* Adam the shame and pain of death, that my children may be restored; and I am rejoicing in my privilege." It was Adam who brought the race into death, but Eve was "in the transgression." It is the Second Adam who brings the race into life, but his bride, the Church, is permitted to share in the Sin-offering, that she may share in the deliverance.

Here, then, we leave our present study of this important subject. We have found that *in the seven important features of our Lord's work and ministry, a share is given to the Church.* It shares: (1) in his calling; (2) in his anointing; (3) in the witnessing, and planting of truth in the earth; (4) in the suffering which is incidental to the witness; (5) in the reproach of Christ, the reproach of bearing sin; (6) in the death of Christ, being immersed into his death; and (7) in the resurrection and glory which is to follow, when Jesus, the Head, and the Church his body will be the glorious Christ, who will minister to, and bless all the families of the earth, and who will make known throughout all ages the glory of the love and the majesty of the character of our glorious God.

AMEN.

A Tree planted by the Rivers of Water.

(By Brother JOHN EDGAR.)

First Psalm, 1-3:—*"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he* [this man of God of whom the Psalmist speaks] *shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."*

THE more we enquire into the laws which govern the natural and spiritual worlds, the more we find them in harmony with each other. Hence we conclude that they owe their existence to the same author. The natural man is apt to place the laws of nature first, but the man of God knows that the spiritual laws are the more important. In fact, it would seem as if God actually arranged every thing in nature so as to make clear to our understanding the great spiritual truths which otherwise might be beyond our comprehension.

We find many examples of this in the Scriptures. For instance, the nation of Israel is repeatedly symbolized as a vine tree, a tree which is quite useless except for one purpose, fruit-bearing. Turn to the 15th chapter of Ezekiel, and see what the Prophet says: "And the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work?" Who would think of taking the wood of a vine tree to do any work!—"or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?—Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned? Therefore thus saith the Lord God: as the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem." The Lord could have made the vine a great tree like the fir or the cedar, but he did not choose to do so, doubtless because he wished to illustrate his purpose with regard to the nation of Israel, namely, that the sole primary object for which he had chosen them was that they might bear the fruits of holiness: "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (Deut. 10: 12, 13).

Ezekiel's prophecy was fulfilled in the year 70 A.D., when the nation of Israel was cast into the fire of trouble and destroyed. Our Lord Jesus explains the reason in the 21st chapter of Matthew, 43rd verse: "Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,"—the fruits of holiness.

Christendom has made the same mistake in this respect as did natural Israel. Like the nation of Israel, the Christian nations have depended on their own strength and their own wisdom instead of on the Lord's, and they have become great in the eyes of the world. They have failed to see that the sole primary object for which the Lord has chosen them is that they should bear the fruits of holiness, as the Apostle explains: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4: 3). For this reason, the Lord is casting them off and is giving the Kingdom to a nation bearing the fruits thereof, the holy

nation, redeemed out of every kindred and tongue and people, despised and rejected by men, but chosen of God. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor. 1: 26–29).

To be God's people, we must not only believe in the Lord, but we must also suffer for his sake (Phil. 1: 29); we must deny ourselves and take up our cross daily and follow him. Those who do this are the true Israel, the true vine. They are the nation who will inherit the Kingdom of heaven. Why? Because they have recognized that they must not depend upon worldly wisdom, worldly strength, worldly position, or upon anything else that this world can offer, but that their dependence is to be entirely upon the Lord; and they are striving with his help to cultivate the fruits of holiness. It was because Jesus with his disciples followed this course that he could say: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15: 1, 5).

A Tree Planted by Rivers of Water.

The tree described in the first Psalm, unlike the vine mentioned by Jesus and Ezekiel, does not refer however, to the nation of Israel but to the individual man of God. It may at first seem strange that God should compare a man to a tree; but it is evident from the Psalmist's use of the illustration that there must be some truth underlying it, and if we can only find out what this truth is, doubtless we shall be enriched by it spiritually.

A tree planted by rivers of water has, as a rule, plenty of life, because it has access to and absorbs plenty of water. The same tree if transplanted to a desert, would soon die from lack of water. So it is with the man of God. It is only when he has access to the rivers of the water of truth, the Books of the Bible, that he can grow spiritually, and the more of the truth he absorbs and uses, the more vitality he gets.

Before there can be a tree there must first be a seed, and that seed must be sown in prepared ground. If the ground is hard, it will require to be broken up, but it does not always require such energetic treatment. In the parable of the sower, our Lord spoke of the different kinds of ground, and said that the good ground was the pure and honest heart. The preparation of the ground means the process by which we come to a realization that we cannot of ourselves be pleasing to the Lord, and that, therefore, we need a Saviour. If, while in this attitude of mind and heart, we turn to have faith toward God through Jesus Christ, and being justified by faith, have peace with God, we are then ready to receive the seed, the word of the Kingdom, into our heart, and become New Creatures in Jesus Christ. Thus the ground in which the seed is sown is the justified mind and heart.

The seed, as Jesus explained (Matt. 13: 19), is the word of the Kingdom, the glad message that Christ's Kingdom is to be set up on earth, and that, if only we deny ourselves and take up our cross daily and follow Christ, we shall be joint-heirs with him in that Kingdom for the grand purpose of blessing all the families of the earth to the glory of God the Father, and of his Son, Jesus Christ. If the seed is properly received into the pure and honest heart, it at once begins to take root and sprout. The root represents the faith of the New Creature.

There are two acts of faith, the faith of justification and the faith of consecration. Our Lord Jesus did not require to take the first step because he was never anything but just or righteous, but he consecrated himself by faith. He had such faith in his Father in heaven that he delighted to do his will, even though he knew that this meant the surrender of all his life-rights as a human being, that he would be blotted out of existence, and that the mighty power of God would be required to raise him from the dead to a new nature, the Divine Nature (Eph. 1: 19, 20). This does not require so much faith on our part, because Christ was the first to rise from the dead (Acts 26: 23). He led the way, and we know that what our Heavenly Father has done for him, he is abundantly able and willing to do for us.

The two acts of faith are shown in the 5th chapter of Romans. In the first verse, we are told that it is *by faith* that we are justified and so have peace with God; and then in the next verse we are told further that it is *by faith* also that we have access into this grace wherein we stand, the grace or favour of sanctification, and so have hope of the glory of God. The first act of faith, by which we are justified, is the preparation of the ground, the heart. If the seed, the word or glad tidings of the Kingdom, is properly received into such a heart and takes root there, the New Creature is begotten. The root is the faith of the New Creature, the second act of faith, the faith of consecration. It is the small beginning which eventually, if permitted to grow, will develop into the mature fruit-tree, the man of

God, the New Creature in Christ Jesus.

When the seed of the fruit-tree is sown it sends out little root-tendrils to absorb water and the various minerals or earthly elements which have been dissolved by the water. Soon a little stem sprouts and shows itself above ground. This little stem then sends out little branches, which, with the root and the stem grow thicker and longer and stronger year by year. When the branches put forth leaves and eventually buds, flowers and fruit, we have the mature fruit-tree.

The New Creature Compared to a Tree.

Let us now consider the various parts of the tree in detail, and compare these with the various stages in the development of the New Creature as outlined in 2 Pet. 1: 5–7, and we shall be struck with the wonderful aptness of the illustration, which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Psalmist uses in our text.

The Apostle's words are: "Besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity."

The Root of Faith.

The first of the graces is the root of faith. As with the root of a tree, its tendrils are at first small and delicate, but they grow and spread in all directions with the continued growth of the New Creature.

The root of a tree has two functions:

(1) It is the part of the tree which *takes hold of the ground.* At first the hold is very feeble, so that even a child could pluck it up; but by and by, when the tree is large, it would defy the united strength of many strong men to uproot it. It is the same with our faith as New Creatures. Faith is the part which takes hold of the ground, the justified heart or will. At first, when our faith is small, we should be easily uprooted, were it not that the Lord is caring for us at this as at every stage. Gradually with our spiritual development, the various branches of our faith grow and spread out so as to take a firmer hold of our hearts. Some of them take hold of that part of our heart or will which regulates our thoughts, so that we come more and more to think as Jesus thought; others take hold of those parts of our heart or will which regulate our speech and general conduct, so that we gradually come to talk as Jesus talked, and walk as he walked. The more our faith grows and the firmer the hold it takes of our heart, the better we are able to withstand the assaults of the enemy. Faith is the great foundation grace, the one without which it would be impossible for us to grow. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

(2) The other function of the root of a tree is *the absorption of water from the ground, and of the various earthly or mineral elements in the ground, which can be dissolved by the water and are useful for the growth of the tree.* Water forms three-fourths of the weight of most plants. Accordingly it is indispensable. If the tree were deprived of it for even a day, it would begin to wither. Coming from the "rivers of water," beside which the tree is planted, it percolates through the ground, searches out the various earthly elements which are there, dissolves them little by little, and is then absorbed by the root. All the water that enters into the structure of the tree comes by the root; none of it enters by any other part, not even through the leaves.

The rivers of water by which the New Creature is planted are the different Books of the Bible, and the water of truth from them percolates into our hearts, through the channels of our eyes and our ears. When it enters our hearts, it searches out the different natural elements which it finds there, and gradually dissolves them. One of these elements is ambition, which leads the natural man to strive to be great in this world, to make a name for himself, to accumulate riches, etc. However desirable this may be from the worldly point of view, it is a wrong principle so far as the man of God is concerned; but when the truth gets into the heart, the natural element of ambition is gradually dissolved, and as it becomes absorbed along with the water of truth, it is transformed from an earthly ambition into a spiritual ambition, a heavenly ambition. This spiritual ambition leads the New Creature to strive to please God, whatever men may think of him; it leads him to lay up in store for himself treasure in heaven, and makes him "covet earnestly the best gifts," in order that he may be counted worthy of becoming a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, and so be enabled to satisfy the desires of his heart in glorifying God and helping to bless all the families of the earth.

Another natural element is that of combativeness which many of us possess to a greater or less extent. The natural man who has the quality of combativeness is apt to be very objectionable, but when such a man becomes a New Creature in Christ, the truth searches out the natural combativeness in his heart and gradually dissolves it, and as it becomes absorbed by the faith of the New Creature, it is transformed into a spiritual combativeness. This quality is one of the finest which can be possesesd by the

man of God, because, properly directed, it enables him to carry on a warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and so to fight the good fight of faith. The natural man uses his combativeness to fight others for the sake of himself; the man of God uses his combativeness to fight himself for the sake of others. We must all have this quality, to some extent at least. If we do not possess it naturally, we shall require to pray to our Heavenly Father to assist us. You know how the skilful gardener adds to the ground whatever elements may be lacking, if they are necessary to the growth of the tree. I am sure the Lord will give us whatever elements are needful to our spiritual growth.

The root, then, represents our faith, and just as the root is the only part of the tree which absorbs water, so the man of God receives the truth only by the one means, namely, his faith. If a man lacks faith, he will not be able to receive the truth. That explains the reason why so many tell us that the *Divine Plan of the Ages* is the most difficult book they ever read. They have not the root of faith in their hearts. But the New Creature by his faith can, and must drink in the water of truth. If he is deprived of it for even a day, he begins to wither.

What is in the root which enables it to absorb the water with the dissolved earthly elements? It is the sap, and the process of absorption is called endosmose. By endosmose is meant the natural law by which, when a thin fluid is separated by a porous wall from a more concentrated fluid, the latter absorbs the former. The sap is thicker than the water in the ground and therefore absorbs it with its dissolved earthly elements through the medium of the root. Similarly, the Holy Spirit (which, I understand, is represented by the sap), by a spiritual process corresponding to endosmose, absorbs the water of truth together with the natural elements which have been dissolved by the truth; and the medium through which this absorption is effected is our faith, the root of the New Creature. In this way the measure of the Holy Spirit is gradually increased in the New Creature, and just as the sap not only nourishes the root but ascends to the other parts of the tree, the trunk, branches, leaves, etc., and nourishes them also, so the Holy Spirit thus increased in measure and strength, develops not only the faith of the New Creature, but also the other graces which we have still to consider.

Add To Your Faith, Virtue.

If a seed is sown and takes root, no one is at first aware of the fact. It is not until the little root adds to itself a stem and the stem appears above the ground that we can say: "Ah! A seed has been planted there, and it has taken root." The stem is the first visible manifestation. This brings us to our second point. The Apostle Peter says: "Add to your faith virtue." The word translated "virtue" properly means "fortitude" (see Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*). When we present our bodies a living sacrifice to the Lord, the root of faith, the first step in the development of the New Creature, is in our hearts, but at first no one knows it except ourselves. It is not until we add to our faith fortitude that others come to know that the Word of Truth has taken root. Fortitude is the first visible manifestation of the New Creature. If we do not develop fortitude, our faith will die; just as in the case of the natural seed, if a stem fails to appear, the root will die.

What does this quality of fortitude mean? It means the courage of our faith. When we add to our faith fortitude, we not only believe in our heart, but we also confess with our mouth that Jesus is our Lord, and it is when we begin to tell this to people and to show it in our daily life and conduct that others learn that we are Christians. We must not be ashamed of Christ. If we are, he will be ashamed of us when he comes to reckon with us. I remember one day, when sitting in a train, I had some tracts in my pocket. My faith told me to hand them to my fellow passengers, but the flesh rebelled. I was very nearly yielding when the thought came to me, "Be not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." I pulled the tracts out of my pocket and looked at them. There on the cover of the uppermost one I saw the very words which had come to my mind: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Then faith had the victory, Having now the courage of my convictions, I handed round the tracts, and found it not so dreadful after all.

Why should we be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ? It is such good news! Poor groaning humanity is waiting for it. Even though men may sneer or jeer at you, or persecute you for believing it and proclaiming it, by and by in the day of visitation, they will remember your good works which they behold, and will glorify God on your behalf (1 Pet. 2: 12).

Virtue or fortitude is that grace which enables us to give the truth to others and to model our own lives by it, and to persevere in both in spite of opposition, and also in spite of repeated failures. At first, when we are only young plants, we bend at every blast of adversity, but by and by when we grow more mature, we are able to withstand any storm which may assail our faith in God and his truth.

ADD TO YOUR VIRTUE, KNOWLEDGE.

When you begin to speak of the truth to others, you find very soon that you cannot explain it so clearly as you would wish, and questions are put to you, which you find you cannot answer. For instance, you will be asked: "Is not that a second chance?" and "Would that not lead to sin?" The effect is to send you again and again to the rivers of truth to refresh your memory, and add to your fortitude knowledge; and while refreshing your memory, you will find your heart refreshed also. The more you impart the truth to others, the more you add to your own knowledge, the clearer and more precious the truth becomes to you. Again, when you begin to mould your life in accordance with the will of God, the various experiences through which you pass, the opposition you receive, the failures you make, and all the many trials and difficulties which you are bound to encounter on the narrow way, send you again and again to the Word of God for instruction as well as for comfort and exhortation.

Just as there are many branches in a good tree, so many branches of knowledge require to be cultivated by the true Christian who desires to be conformed to the image of Christ. Seeking to know God, his glorious character and his wonderful plan, and Christ, who is the express image of the Father, the true Christian develops branches of knowledge in the heavenly direction. Alongside these he finds it necessary and pleasant to develop branches of knowledge concerning the Prophets and the Apostles and the other Old Testament and New Testament Saints, and still other branches concerning the graces of the spirit and the exceeding great and precious promises of God. Besides these there are many more! including, lower down, branches of knowledge concerning the wiles of the devil, and also the various temptations (troubles and allurements) which come to us from the world and from our flesh. We must see to it that we can say with the Apostle Paul: "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices." If you think it is unnecessary to know about the wiles of the devil you will fail to be forewarned, and not being forewarned you will not be forearmed, with the probable result that sooner or latter you will be overthrown by the adversary.

Still lower down, and tending to grow earthwards are many branches of secular knowledge which are not so important as the others. Yet they are necessary in some degree to the proper understanding of the Bible. For instance, we ought to know something about grammar and the meaning of words. It is helpful also to know a little of the Greek, and possibly also of the Hebrew language, at least a few words for the better understanding of the truth, a knowledge of geography, history, botany, etc., is often helpful in grasping the meaning of many of the illustrations and historical and geographical allusions so frequently met with in the Scriptures.

But while adding to our fortitude knowledge, it is essential that we should attend also to the next of the Apostle's injunctions:

ADD TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, TEMPERANCE (SELF-CONTROL).

If there were no branches on a tree, there would be no fruit, and small branches would bear little fruit. So it is with the New Creature in Christ Jesus. Without knowledge of God and his glorious plan of redemption he will bear no fruit, and if his knowledge be small, his fruitage will also be small. It is evident then, that we must cultivate many branches of knowledge. But a fruit-tree does not grow simply for the purpose of having branches. However fine these branches may be, it must develop fruit in order to justify its existence. This will necessitate judicious pruning. A tree that is not pruned simply runs to wood. Similarly, the purpose for which the man of God must develop the various branches of knowledge is that he may in due time bear an abundant fruitage of love, and for this purpose careful pruning and training will be necessary.

In the case of the New Creature, however,—and here the analogy between the tree and the New Creature fails,—much is left to the freedom of his will. He is treated as a reasoning being, and is expected to do much of his own pruning. Paul says: "For if we judge ourselves we shall not be judged, but if we are judged we are chastened of the Lord that we may not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11: 31, 32). In other words, we ought daily to examine ourselves and exercise self-control. If we do not, we are not using the spirit of a sound mind, and the Lord will require to prune or chasten us, just as the skilful gardener requires to prune the tree which has no reasoning power to guide it.

The sole object of our studies should be to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed. The development of the different branches of knowledge should be so controlled that we may grow on them the fruit of love. That is what the branches are for; and the reason why there are so many branches, is that there may be the more fruit.

We require to exercise control, especially in regard to the branches of secular knowledge. In the natural fruit-tree the lowest branches tend to grow

towards the earth. After the same fashion the branches of secular knowledge are prone to grow earthwards. We should remember not to cultivate these branches simply for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, nor for earthly purposes other than our daily vocation (and then to as restricted an extent as possible), but only in order to understand God's Word, and so help our spiritual growth. It is best to be content for the most part with what secular knowledge we possessed before we became New Creatures in Christ Jesus. The more time and energy we devote to the cultivation of secular branches, the more our spiritual growth is apt to become stunted, and our fruitage of love of poor quality. The brethren can be of assistance to one another in this matter. For instance, from my former study of the secular branch of botany, I am endeavouring to explain to you the Psalmist's meaning and through this the Apostle Peter's exhortation, so that your and my own spiritual growth may be aided.

We have seen, then, that a tree which is not pruned runs to wood. It may become large and imposing, but its fruit is scanty and of poor quality. So is it with the New Creature if he does not exercise self-control. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up."

Self-control must be exercised also in order to keep the body under, so that we may not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of our mind to prove what is the good and acceptable will of God. Self-control is needed so that we may not be unduly cast down by our failures, nor exalted by our successes. It is needed to prevent us from being turned aside from the narrow way by rebuffs or persecutions, or from becoming filled with pride because of flatteries.

Add To Your Self-Control, Patience.

We cannot develop patience until we are able to exercise self-control. This quality of patience is represented by the leaves of the tree. You may say: "That is very strange. What is there about the leaves of a tree which enables them to represent patience? Leaves will grow on a tree though it has not been pruned." That is true, and here again the analogy between the tree and the New Creature fails, but there are several points of close resemblance between the leaves of a tree and the patience of the man of God.

If you see a tree without leaves at a time when you expect them, you say at once: "I am afraid that that tree is dying," and if you have any interest in it, you water it, in order, if possible, to give it life. But if you see that it has a profusion of green leaves you say: "Ah! There is plenty of life in that tree," and if it is a fruit-tree you expect to get good fruit by and by. So it is with the New Creature. If you see a man of God who has not developed this quality of patience at a time when you should have expected it, you say: "I am afraid he is dying spiritually." Then you give him the water of truth and pray for him, and help him as much as you can, in order, if possible, to give him life (Jas. 5: 20; 1 John 5: 16). On the other hand, once you see patience developed, you say he has spiritual life in him, and the more patience he has the more spiritual life you think he has, and the more you expect that in due time the ripe fruit of love will make its appearance.

There are two special qualities possessed by the leaves of a tree which cause it to resemble patience. One is their mobility, and the other is the fact that they absorb Carbonic Acid gas, and split it up into Carbon and Oxygen. The Carbon is then used for the growth of the tree, and the Oxygen, that element of the atmosphere which sustains the life of man and the lower animals, is given off into the air.

(1) You know how mobile are the leaves of a tree. When a puff of wind comes, the leaves all bend under it, and then, when it has passed, they recover themselves immediately as if nothing had happened. In this respect the leaves differ markedly from the trunk of a well-developed tree. The trunk represents our fortitude, our firmness to principles; the leaves, on the other hand, represent our patience, our yielding to troubles and trials where no principle is at stake.

Just as in the case of the well-developed natural tree the strong trunk, together with the firm hold which the root has in the ground, prevents the tree from being uprooted by any strong wind or other cause, so the mature man of God, because of his deep faith and strong courage in the Lord (not in himself), is able to stand firm against the wind of any false doctrine or anything else intended by the Adversary to cause him to swerve from his duty to the Lord. We are told that the servant of the Lord must not strive, but we are told also that he must "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3, R.V.). Very different from this is the quality of patience. There are plenty of trials which come to us from without which do not affect matters of principle. In such cases we must yield, we must exercise patience.

Remember the example of our Lord Jesus. When the truth was at stake, when he was tempted to turn aside from the will of God, nothing could make him swerve. Knowing that the Lord would help him, he set his face like a flint; and he knew that he would

not be confounded (Isa. 50: 7). He had strong fortitude, but at the same time he had infinite patience. His persecutions and adversities he bore meekly, patiently. When he was reviled, he reviled not again, and he allowed himself to be scourged, spat upon and sneered at, without retaliating.

(2) The other quality possessed by the leaves is the power of absorbing Carbonic Acid gas, splitting it up into Carbon and Oxygen, assimilating the former and returning the latter to the atmosphere. All the Carbon (Charcoal) in the tree is extracted from the atmosphere, and it is the leaves alone which do this wonderful and laborious work. Yet Carbon forms one half the dry weight of a tree. It is represented chiefly in the woody fibre which gives strength to its various parts. This reminds us that it is only when we have the quality of patience that we can add moral fibre to our spiritual being, and so develop strength of character. That is why the Apostle James urges us to let patience have her perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.

On the under surface of leaves there are a great many little pores called stomata (mouths), through which the Carbonic Acid gas is absorbed into the leaves and the Oxygen is liberated into the atmosphere. Little particles, called Chlorophyll-granules, which give the green colour to the leaves, seize hold of the Carbonic Acid gas the moment it enters, and split it up into its component parts, one part of Carbon and two of Oxygen. The Carbon is assimilated to give strength to the various parts of the tree. The two parts of Oxygen, on the other hand, escape into the air. Thus plants absorb Carbonic Acid gas, and give off Oxygen.

In the case of human beings and the lower animals, the process is exactly reversed. Through their lungs they absorb Oxygen and exhale Carbonic Acid gas. Oxygen is life-giving to man and animals, and Carbonic Acid gas is poisonous to them, and if there were no plants the atmosphere would soon become exhausted of Oxygen and surcharged with Carbonic Acid gas, and all flesh would die. How wonderful is the wisdom of God in this interchange and balance of nature

There is the same relationship between natural and spiritual men as there is between animals and plants. The atmosphere in which trees and animals live, represents our environment, the circumstances amidst which our lives are spent. The Oxygen would fitly represent those circumstances which conduce to material prosperity, and the Carbonic Acid gas those which lead to material adversity. The natural man thrives on material prosperity, just as he thrives on Oxygen. It is life-giving to him. Just see the effect produced on a man by giving him an increase of salary and a better position. Doesn't he thrive! Doesn't he enjoy himself! The more prosperous he is in a natural sense, the more he comes to think that the evil in this world has been over-rated. But suppose earthly adversity comes, he is at once cast down. Should his adversity increase, so does his depression, and with its continuance he becomes more and more dejected and despondent, till in extreme cases he falls into such a state of despair that he may finally commit suicide. Thus, material adversity, like Carbonic Acid gas, is poisonous to the natural man.

With the spiritual man, the New Creature in Christ Jesus, the reverse condition obtains. If the New Creature received no physical, financial or social adversity, he would wither away spiritually. He requires adversity for his spiritual growth. By means of his patience, he splits it up, takes the good out of it in order to add moral fibre to his being, and gives off the double portion of prosperity to others.

There is thus the same interchange and balance between the man of God and the man of the world as there is between plants and animals. Just as men and animals absorb Oxygen and exhale Carbonic Acid gas, and trees on the contrary, absorb Carbonic Acid gas and emit Oxygen, just so worldly men, while themselves thriving on material prosperity, inflict adversity on those who are endeavouring to live godly in Christ Jesus, and the latter, instead of being injured by the experience, make use of every earthly adversity which comes to them to do good to the world as they have opportunity, while at the same time they add to their own spiritual strength and sustain their own spiritual life. Jesus, speaking to his disciples, said: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15: 18–25). But by returning good for evil, blessing those that curse them, doing good to those that hate them, and praying for those who despitefully use them, the foot-step followers of the gentle Jesus reprove the world of sin, and exercise a preservative influence over the world, preventing it from going rapidly into deeper moral degradation and death.

Jesus declared this truth when, after telling his followers that God's true prophets had always been persecuted for righteousness' sake, and bidding

them rejoice and be exceeding glad when they were reviled and persecuted for his sake, he added: "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5: 10–13). Just as salt exercises a preservative influence on flesh, and as plants exercise a preservative influence on animals, so the saints of God have all along exercised a preservative influence on the world, for the few righteous men in the world have preserved it from destruction. That is what Paul meant when he quoted Isaiah: "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah" (Rom. 9: 29). It was because there were not even ten righteous men in Sodom that the Lord destroyed it (Gen. 18: 16–32).

Before leaving this part of our subject, I should like to draw your attention to two other points of importance. The first is that the proportion of Carbonic Acid gas in the atmosphere is very small, only one five-hundredth that of Oxygen. So is it also in the spiritual atmosphere of the New Creature. The proportion of adversity is, as a rule, much less than that of prosperity. Consequently we must be careful not to waste any of it.

The other point is that the Carbonic Acid gas is absorbed and split up only under the influence of the light and warmth which comes from the sun. During the night-time this action entirely ceases. In the same way, it is only when the New Creature is under the influence of God's light and warmth, his wisdom and love emanating from the Gospel, that he can get the good out of every adversity by means of his patience. "Ye beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 20, 21).

ADD TO PATIENCE, GODLINESS; AND TO GODLINESS, LOVE OF THE BRETHREN; AND TO LOVE OF THE BRETHREN, LOVE.

The tree is now well-grown, root, trunk, and branches, it has been pruned and trained, and it has produced a profusion of fresh, green leaves. We can picture before our minds just such a strong beautiful character, full of spiritual life and energy, giving grateful shelter to man and beast. Full of faith, and with strong courage in the Lord, he is not afraid to speak about Christ, and model his life according to his conception of Christ. Not only does he know the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, but he can expound it to others and make plain to them the mysteries of God. Indeed, so numerous and extensive may be the branches of knowledge which he has cultivated that he may have been called to be the pastor of a large and wealthy congregation, or the occupant of a chair in some theological college. Such a character as this would surely be the admiration of all who know him, but even this may not be the sum of all his virtues. His self-control may be such that he is able to keep calm in all circumstances, to keep his body under, and to so arrange his reading and observation that he studies only such subjects and these in such a way that his spiritual growth may be increased. Lastly, his patience may be so perfect that he is able to endure adversity, reviling and persecution, be strengthened in character by the trials to which he is exposed, and return good for evil. Surely, you would say, such a beautiful character as that would be fit for the Kingdom of heaven.

No, dear brethren, something more is necessary before he can be accepted as a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. If with all these excellent qualities he has not in his due season grown love, God will cut him down as of no further use. Strange, is it? No, we never grow fruit-trees for their foliage; we grow fruit-trees for their fruit. If the good that a man does to others is at the best merely the outcome of his faith, knowledge, and patience, and in order to build up his own spiritual character, if he does not reach the stage when the good he does to others is the outcome of love for them and for God, he has not fulfilled the purpose for which God had chosen him. Love must be the motive underlying all our words and actions before God will recognize us as having cultivated the fruit of holiness. It is only to such as develop this God-like quality of love that the Lord will say in his own time: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

Paul gives this thought in the beautiful words of 1 Cor. 13: 1–3: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

Just as a fruit-tree in addition to its leaves must develop buds, blossoms, and lastly fruit, in order to justify its existence, so the man of God must add to his patience godliness, to his godliness love of the brethren, and to his love of the brethren love. The godliness is represented by the buds, the love of the brethren by the blossoms, and the love by the fruit. The bud, the blossom and the fruit represent three

stages, the ultimate one being the fruit, that for which the tree is grown; in the same way godliness, love of the brethren and love represent three stages, the ultimate one being love in the all-comprehensive sense, the fruit for which the New Creature is trained and developed.

Add to Your Patience, Godliness.

I have heard some of the friends say that godliness means God-likeness. It is true that the root-meaning is God-likeness, but this is an example of the error into which one may fall by insisting too strongly on the root-meaning of words. Godliness is one of many words which have changed their meaning in the course of time. If it meant God-likeness, it would not be necessary to add to it love of the brethren and love, because God is love, and if we were like God we should have reached the mark of love in its all-comprehensive sense, the mark of perfect love. The Greek word translated "godliness" in the verse which we are considering is "*eusebeia*," which means piety, reverence for God. Our English word "godliness" in its usual meaning is, therefore, a good translation of the Greek term.

That is the bud, the first stage in the formation of the fruit of love. The man who has reached only this stage is not so attractive as one who has added to his godliness love of the brethren. The bud is a little hard, green thing. The germ of the blossom and fruit is there, but it is hidden from sight, covered over with a hard capsule, and if you were to put the bud into your mouth, you would find it rather bitter, unpleasant to the taste.

Those who have reached the stage of godliness may be expected in due time to develop the fruit of love, but so far they have only the beginning of it.

The Scottish race of two or three generations ago formed an illustration of the effect of this grace of godliness. These men had great reverence for God, and love for righteousness. They had what we might call the duty-love, a desire to obey God's commandments. They were honest in their business and in all their affairs of life, and were very strict with their children. They were respected by everyone, but like the germ in the bud, their love, although it was there, was hidden. It was considered a sign of weakness to show their love, or to be demonstrative in any way. The features of these men, as may be noticed in their portraits, or in the faces of the few who are still alive, were hard and stern. These characteristics may to some extent be natural to the Scottish race, but I believe they were chiefly the result of their Calvinistic training. A man who is sincere, always tries to be like the God whom he worships, and the Calvinistic God is stern, unlovable.

Add to Your Godliness, Love of the Brethren.

Godliness is a good quality, but it is only the bud-stage, the first or duty-stage of love. Those who come to know God better will add to their godliness love of the brethren. This is represented by the blossom.

Just as there comes a time when the petals which are forming inside the bud become so large that one fine morning, through the kindly influence of the sun's light and warmth, they burst the hard capsule and the bud becomes a blossom, so there comes a time in the development of the New Creature, who is being conformed to the image of Christ, when through the influence of the wisdom and love of God which shines from the pages of the Gospel, the love which is growing in his heart bursts the reserve which has hitherto restrained it, and he finds that he has added to his godliness or duty-love love of the brethren.

That which helps the Christian most is the Lord's new commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you," and John's explanation of this in his first epistle, chapter 3, verse 16: "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (R.V.).

A tree in blossom is peculiarly attractive. Its beauty and its fragrant odour appeal to us. Is it not exactly the same with many dear brothers and sisters of our acquaintance? Their beauty of character and the sweet-smelling savour of their many self-sacrificing acts of kindness appeal to us. We are attracted to them. Is it not the same with any company of the Lord's brethren who present the beauty and fragrant odour of brotherly love? Many have told me that the first thing which attracted them to the truth was the love manifest among the brethren.

But remember that "the (natural) heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Our hearts will sometimes tell us that we have developed this grace of brotherly love when we have not done so. So long as the germ is shut up inside a hard capsule of reserve, we have reached only the bud-stage. It is not until the petals have burst open the hard covering that we can truly say we have reached the blossom-stage. To have reached the blossom-stage of love of the brethren our love must be seen. It must not be shut up within our hearts but must be manifested by kind, loving words and many little, and possibly some great

self-sacrificing acts of love. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another." But how are all men to know it, unless they see us manifest this love? If they do see it, and especially if they see it in trying circumstances when they would least expect it, then they will know that we are Jesus' disciples.

Remember to say often to yourselves: "Have I this love shut up in my heart?—If so, I have only developed the bud of godliness." Or: "Am I showing the brethren my love by my words and actions? — If so, I am glad, for that means that I have developed into the blossom stage, and soon I should expect to develop the fruit of all-comprehensive love." Remember that to love a brother means that you will tell him so; but it means also something more, as the Apostle says: "Love not in word [only], but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3: 18). Dear Brethren, let us all pray to God that he will enable us not only to have thoughts and desires in the direction of loving our brethren in Christ with a pure heart fervently, but that we shall love them as Christ loved us, namely, by laying down our lives for them in the way he did, no matter whether they are kind and loving to us in return, or are speaking evil of us and are unkind toward us. Let us remember that we are all still in the flesh and liable to err.

This brings us to a special point of likeness between the blossoms of trees and this love of the brethren. The blossoms lay down their lives for one another. It so happens that God has formed them in such a way that no blossom can fertilize itself, for the pollen, the life-giving part of the flower, ripens first. It is not until the pollen has been cast off that the germ inside ripens, ready to receive and be fertilized by the pollen from other blossoms. When it has been fertilized, the petals fall off and the fruit begins to grow. How does the pollen get to the other blossoms? It is by means of insects which flit about from flower to flower, carrying the pollen with them on their legs and bodies. They do this, not for the purpose of fertilizing the blossoms, but in order to suck the sweetness out of them.

That is exactly what happens to us. When we have blossomed forth into love of the brethren, we are a mark for Satan. He is not the adversary of the world, for the whole world, we are told, already lies in the wicked one (1 John 5: 19, R.V.), but he is the adversary of those who show the spirit of Christ, the spirit of love; and the more we manifest love of the brethren, the more we are a prey for Satan. It is he who sends along the insects of trouble to suck the sweetness out of our lives and to carry away our vitality.

Insects, many of them, are beautiful to look at; frequently they appear quite insignificant; but let one of these creatures alight upon our hand or neck or other exposed part of our body, and begin to crawl over us, how disgusted we feel! Instinctively we brush them off or try to kill them. Dear brethren, these insects represent the trials which come to the New Creature. When they visit some of the other brethren, they do not look so very bad, they appear to us sometimes almost insignificant, but let them alight upon us, and at once we find how very disagreeable they are, much more so than we had expected. Instinctively we try to get rid of them, but just as with insects, the more we fight against them the worse, as a rule, they become, and the majority of them are poisonous.

In sending us trials for the purpose of sucking the sweetness out of our lives, and poisoning us, Satan succeeds so far as the body is concerned. Our pollen, our human vitality, goes with the trials. But it is just here that Satan defeats his own ends, because by these same trials, the New Creature is strengthened in character, and learns how to sympathize with others who are passing through similar experiences. We are being prepared in the same way that Jesus was prepared, for "it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2: 10). The trials with which God permitted Satan to tempt our Lord Jesus were the same as those which we endure. He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4: 15).

The more trials we have, if we are rightly exercised by them, the better we are enabled to sympathize with our brethren in their sufferings, not only with those of them who are rejoicing in the light of present truth, but also with such as are still in bondage in the nominal system, or are out in the wilderness condition disgusted with all professions of religion. The more we sympathize with them, the more of our time, money, talents, influence, and energies do we surrender for their temporal and especially for their spiritual interests. We do not consider ourselves first and our brethren afterwards, but the reverse of this. We lay down our lives, our human vitality, for them, just as the blossoms lay down their lives for one another.

One very important fact to remember is that the blossoms have nothing whatever to do with sending the insects to the other blossoms. Though we know that the trials which come to us as New Creatures

work together for our spiritual good, and are therefore essential for us, we have nothing to do with putting trials upon others. As Jesus said: "It must needs be that offences come, but woe unto him through whom the offence cometh!" The Lord will permit Satan and all who are willing to be his agents to place trials upon the brethren, knowing that these will act as tests for them, and if rightly used, will enable them to become more developed spiritually, but the Lord's vengeance will surely come sooner or later upon all "through whom the offence cometh." God forbid that any of us should act as agents of Satan in this or any other way! If we should happen to be led into placing trials upon the brethren, let us confess our sins at the throne of grace and endeavour to make amends for the wrong we have committed.

ADD TO YOUR LOVE OF THE BRETHREN, LOVE.

Just as the blossom, which has given up its sweetness and vitality, is ready to be fertilized and become developed into fruit through further visits of the insects bearing the pollen from other blossoms, so the New Creature who has through trials lost much of the sweetness and vitality of his human life, and is laying down his life for the brethren, is ready to develop from love of the brethren into love in its all-comprehensive sense through the visitation of still further trials, and through the sympathetic assistance of his brethren who are laying down their lives for him. In this way he learns to sympathize not only with his brethren in Christ Jesus, but also with the world of mankind, and finally with his enemies.

(1) While endeavouring to love righteousness and obey God (duty-love), he discovers how very frail he is, and how much he desires others to make allowance for his failings. (2) This teaches him to make allowance for the frailties of the brethren, and enables him to learn how to love them (brotherly-love). He finds how much good he can do himself and them by bearing patiently with them and treating them kindly, lovingly, even though to do so he requires to sacrifice what he might justly call his rights. (3) In this way, through these further trials and through the help which he himself receives from the brethren who are laying down their lives for him, he becomes, so to speak, fertilized, and develops the fruit of love (all-comprehensive love). He finds that he is now able to sympathize with both friends and enemies, to make large allowances for their many failings, and to do them good as he has opportunity, for "love covers the multitude of sins." In this way he is getting himself ready to reign with Christ and bless the world.

The best way to overcome your enemies is to be kind to them. Very few enemies can withstand persistent kindness, if your love for them is unfeigned. The fruit of love implies love for God, love for righteousness, love for the brethren, love for mankind in general, love for enemies, love for everything except evil. It is love in the all comprehensive sense of the term. When we have reached that stage, we have reached the mark of perfect love.

This does not mean, however, that there is now no more room for development. At first the fruit is small, hard, green, wrinkled and of unpleasant odour and bitter taste. When eaten, it is apt to be rejected. That represents the quality of our love at the first. In due time, if all goes well, the unripe fruit gives place to the ripe fruit, large, soft, and velvety to the touch. It is pleasant to the eyes, the odour is fragrant, and when eaten it is delicious and good for food. That is how our love is when it is ripe.

If the fruit is left on the tree, insects attack it just as they attacked the blossoms, and by and by it falls to the ground and withers away. But there is something left; there are seeds inside, which, when sown, produce other trees. So it is with the man of God. Trials come upon him to the end; and then, when he falls in death he will in due time be associated with Christ in bringing forth other trees of righteousness. That is how it was with Jesus, as he said: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12: 24). It has been estimated that the proportion of the dead to be raised will be 144,000 to each of the members of Christ's body.

Before closing, there are two further points to which I desire to draw your attention. (1) When a seed is sown, the root does not grow and spread out in every direction and become very large before the stem begins to grow, and the stem does not continue growing until it has reached its full development before the branches begin to appear, and so with the other parts of the tree. On the contrary, all the parts of the tree are formed in their proper order in a comparatively short time, varying with the individual kind of tree, and year by year the various parts continue increasing in growth till full maturity is reached. Just so is it in the case of the New Creature. We do not find faith reaching its full development before fortitude becomes manifest, nor fortitude before knowledge, etc. What we do find is, as in the case of the tree, that all the graces enumerated by the Apostle Peter appear in the order mentioned by him within a comparatively

short period, varying with the individual, and that then, year by year, they continue to grow more or less quickly. We are not to think: "O! I wonder when I shall get to that stage when I can love my enemies, for then I will be ready for the Kingdom." We should reach that stage early in our spiritual growth, but as time goes on and our faith, fortitude, knowledge, etc., increase, our fruit of love will become larger and of finer quality. It is when we have reached that stage that we shall be ready to be received into the Kingdom.

(2) The other point to be remembered is, that if you sow a seed in the ground, and nobody takes care of it, the result may be that a fruit-tree will grow there, but the fruit which grows on that wild tree will be of very poor quality, and the tree itself will be stunted, badly developed. On the other hand, if the tree be attended to by a skilful gardener, it will grow fully and symmetrically, and its fruit will be large, soft, and luscious. Compare, for instance, the crab-apple tree with the properly cultivated apple-tree. It is the same with the New Creature. However anxious we may be that we shall produce fruit in our season and that our leaf shall not wither, no anxiety or exertion on our part will give the desired result apart from the loving care of the Lord, the husbandman. Unlike a tree, we have intelligence and are left largely to the freedom of our will. If we withdraw ourselves from the Lord's care, our spiritual growth will be stunted, and our fruitage of love will be small and of poor quality. To become well-developed spiritually, to develop faith, fortitude, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, love of the brethren and love, we must not rely upon ourselves, but submit ourselves to the Lord. We must learn of him and obey him in everything to the best of our ability. Though Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, it is God alone who giveth the increase (1 Cor. 3: 6). The more we surrender ourselves to him, and the less we rely upon ourselves, the better will be our spiritual growth, and the better fruit we shall be able to grow. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5: 6–7). AMEN.

How strong and sweet my Father's care!
The words like music in the air
Come answering to my whispering prayer,
He cares for thee.

The thought great wonder with it brings,
My cares are all such little things,
But to this truth my glad faith clings,
He cares for me.

Yea, keep me ever in thy love
Dear Father, watching from above,
And let me still thy mercy prove,
And care for me.

And I will learn to cast the care
Which like a heavy load I bear,
Down at thy feet in lowly prayer,
And trust in thee.

For naught can hurt me, shade nor shine,
Nor evil thing touch me nor mine,
Since thou with tenderness divine
Dost care for me.

Temptations and Trials: or Enticements and Tests.

By Brother T. SMEDLEY.

"For we have not a High Priest unable to sympathize with our weaknesses; but one having been tried in all respects like ourselves, apart from sin." "A disciple is not above his teacher; but everyone fully qualified shall be as his teacher." (Heb. 4: 15; Luke 6: 40, Diaglott.)

THE world of mankind has its temptations and trials, and so also have nominal Christians; but we shall confine our remarks to the temptations and trials of those who have left all to follow Jesus, those who have consecrated themselves and become pupils in the School of Christ, and have thereby submitted themselves to be tested in all points like their teacher. Everyone of these is to be *perfected* by the same means as his master.

ENTICEMENTS.

Strong's definition of the word "temptation" is—"an enticement to do evil," or—"a test." A temptation may mean, therefore, an enticement to do evil, or it may mean a test, that is, a means for determining the strength, quality, or quantity of a substance. Thus a temptation might be anything which would entice to evil and thereby test or try the strength of will to do the right; or it might be a test to prove the quantity or quality of the elements of the Christian character without any thought of enticement. All enticements or allurements are tests, but all tests are not enticements or allurements. For instance, to fail in business would be a test but not an enticement.

Satan is the great Tempter who is permitted to attend to the former; and our Heavenly Father will see to it that we get the latter in order that our characters may be fully developed and perfected. Our enticements come from Satan, but our trials from God. Even Jesus "was tempted in all points like as we are." We need not think that we have temptations which Jesus never had. Let us look at the temptations of Jesus in order that we may know the lines upon which our temptations may come.

The Apostle states that Jesus was tempted in all points like his followers, and, additionally, that he thereby became able to help those who are tempted:—"In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour (nourish) them that are tempted" (Heb. 2: 17, 18).

In view of this thought let us consider Jesus' temptations in the wilderness that we may know what to expect. These particulars are given us in the 4th chapter of Matthew, with which we are all familiar:—

1. To make stones into bread. A severe test, because Jesus was very hungry.
2. To cast himself down from the Temple.
3. To worship the Devil by co-operating with him.

Our temptations are similar to our Lord's:—

1. Enticements to misuse the Divine blessing of Truth, by using it for our own aggrandizement. To use spiritual power in the interest of our natural or fleshly desires. Although Paul was endued with power to heal the sick, he did not use this power for his own benefit nor for the benefit of the Church. Even though he asked God three times to remove his "thorn in the flesh," the Lord did not remove it, but said "My grace is sufficient for thee." When Timothy was ill, Paul did not cure him miraculously, but advised him to take a little wine for his stomach's sake.

2. Enticements to throw ourselves into unnecessary danger, trusting that God will uphold us. We are not to presume upon our Father's goodness.

We are not to tempt God, although we know that if *duty* should lead us into danger, he will deliver us. Let us not be afraid. God has promised to keep those who trust in him so long as they are obedient; and, when enticed to tempt God, let us resist as Jesus did by giving a "thus saith the Lord."

3. Enticements to worship Satan by co-operating with him. He does his best to get us to do this. He entices us to grasp, before the time, and by another way, those things which our Heavenly Father has promised us. The end does not justify the means. God's work must be done in God's way and in God's time. We must get things in a legitimate way. "If a man strive for the mastery, yet is he not crowned unless he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. 2: 5).

When we are undergoing testing in any of these ways, let us remember "This is the way the Master went, should not the servant tread it still?" We are not to feel discouraged when passing through these experiences, but, as the Apostle James expresses it, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." We cannot do this easily. It is hard for the flesh, but still the Apostle says we "must count it all joy." Why? Because we know that by the testing of our faith our patience is developed, and that the man who *endures* temptation is blessed. But when any man is tempted along the line of enticement, let him not say that he is tempted of God, because God cannot be tempted with evil. Neither tempteth he any man with evil. When God bade Abraham sacrifice Isaac, he tempted him not by enticing him to do wrong, but by testing his loyalty. It was a test of Abraham's faith in God. Likewise, it is a trial for us to give up all, to present our bodies a living sacrifice; yet it is not too great a test, but only a *reasonable* service.

When we have a temptation to do evil, this does not imply sin; it is the yielding to the temptation which brings forth sin. The Apostle reminds us that there hath no temptation taken us but such as is common to man, but God is faithful who will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10-13). It should be a very comforting thought to know that we can measure our development according to the degree of our temptations or trials.

If a great trial comes upon us, we may look upon it as a sign of the approval of God, because if he permits a great trial he knows that we are able to endure it. Only to the strong will he give great trials, and therefore if we get a great temptation, let us thank the Lord and count it all joy.

In 2 Pet. 2: 9 we read—"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation,"—not: "The Lord knoweth how to keep you from going into temptation." If we are godly, we may rest assured that he knows the best means for our deliverance when the temptation has had the desired effect, then he will deliver us as the Scriptures state.

TESTS.

Let us now consider the second portion of our subject concerning the trials or testings of those who are followers of Jesus. Professor Strong defines the Greek word translated "trial" as "a testing," which implies trustworthiness. Nuttall's Dictionary explains the word "trial" as a means to prove the genuineness of anything by experiments. The same word is translated "prove" in Romans 12: 2, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may *prove* what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Also in 1 Cor. 11: 28, "trial" is translated by the word "examine." "Let a man *examine* himself, and so let him eat."

We have the thought fairly before our minds that, besides being subjected to enticements, we must also undergo tests or trials, so that we may prove certain things by the transforming influence of the new mind. Also we must put ourselves through an examination, or our Heavenly Father will give us the necessary tests or trials. To illustrate. When a chemist wants to find out the quantity and quality of the component parts of a substance, he subjects the substance to a process of testing. So, when God wants to know how much love we have, he sends us a trial of our Love,—our Love for him, for the Brethren, and for the Truth. So also with the other fruits and graces of the Spirit. These trials are to demonstrate the extent of our Love, so that our Father may show us that sometimes we have not so much Love as we thought we had, and thereby have an opportunity to correct ourselves. Love is represented as a cloak to cover a multitude of sins,—not our own, but the sins or transgressions of others. How often and to what extent do we use this mantle of Love?

The next fruit of the spirit is joy. Will this be tested? Oh yes! We shall be tested as to the amount we possess of that joy which rejoices at the blessing and prosperity of others. All people can rejoice when they are receiving personal pleasure, but it is more difficult and praiseworthy to rejoice when others receive honour or blessing.

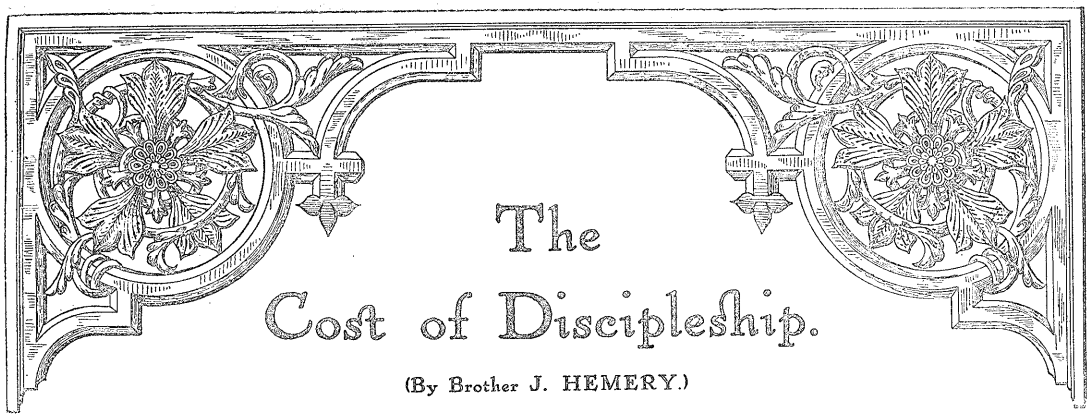
The joy of the world is a selfish joy, and it is possible for us also to look for selfish pleasure, but

our rejoicing should be in the Lord. We must come to the meetings to meet the Lord and not for the selfish joy of meeting those we like. Let us not be selfish, but rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Jehovah will apply searching tests upon us if we are true sons, and nothing will escape His notice. "His eyes behold, his eyelids *try* the children of men: the Lord *trieth* the righteous" (Psa. 11: 4, 5).

These tests are only for those who have presented themselves for that purpose, those who *desire* testings. At one time we did not desire them, but we are coming to more and more appreciate the value of temptations and trials. We are now better able to say with the Psalmist: "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me: try my reins and my heart." "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be a way of perverseness in me" (Psa. 26: 2; 139: 23, 24). We must not think it an extraordinary thing when we are tested. "Beloved, think it not *strange* concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as if some *strange* thing happened unto you, but rejoice inasmuch as you are counted worthy to take part in Christ's sufferings." "Think it not strange!" says the Apostle. Evidently there was a reason for this. Some of us may have thought that the fiery trials should be for others and not for ourselves; but the Apostle tells us that these fiery trials were intended for *us*. This thought was forcefully driven home to my mind when I was looking up the meaning of the word "strange." I found it to mean "belonging to another." Therefore, I now see that whatever trial shall fall to my lot, I must not think of it as "belonging to another," but as belonging to *me*, sent to me by my Heavenly Father. Let us get the thought before our minds that, by our consecration we have entered the School of Christ. The object of our entrance is that we may learn the various lessons set before us; and periodically we shall be tested or examined as to our progress. We shall each have our final examination—our Gethsemane experience—that will determine as to whether we have reached the standard as set before us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Everyone who gets into the "pass list" will have been conformed to the image of God's Dear Son.

In the meantime, let us pay great attention to our arithmetic, adding to our faith, fortitude, etc., and multiplying grace and peace. Also, we need to attend to our grammar, the proper use of words or the art of speaking correctly. Our teacher directs us that when any curse us, we should speak blessed words about them, when they despitefully use us we should pray for them, and that we should rejoice because we are counted worthy to suffer like Jesus. Just as Jesus' testing in Gethsemane was most severe, so we may expect the most severe trials at the end of the way,—but *let us count it all joy!*

In olden times people said: "I love my friends but hate my enemies." But Jesus, the great Schoolmaster, has come and taught us to love our enemies. Let us learn our grammar under our Schoolmaster's supervision. We may see some who are failing in their final examination, their final test. Surely we should not quarrel with any in the School of Christ who may be tearing up their examination papers. Let us be sorry for them and treat them kindly, and let us realize that "The Disciple is not above his Master," but that everyone who becomes fully qualified will require to be perfected by the same means as his Master. AMEN.



The Cost of Discipleship.

(By Brother J. HEMERY.)

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 16: 24, 25.)

AT first sight there appears some contradiction between the words of our Lord and the promise of the wine and milk of the Gospel, "Without money and without price" (Isa. 55: 3). The disciples of our Lord had thirsted for water which would satisfy, they had hungered for better food than the Pharisees provided; many of them had heard John, had become his disciples, and were by him directed to Jesus. Still hungering and thirsting, they followed on, and in Jesus they discovered satisfaction for both heart and mind. "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth," said Philip (John 1: 45).

The disciples of Jesus discovered two things: they found the joy of the Lord, so far as it could then be received, and they found that the joy could be obtained only at considerable cost. They came to Jesus and got the wine and milk of the Kingdom Truths, but found that though no price could be put upon them, nor money given in exchange, yet they must buy, even as Isaiah had said, "*Buy* wine and milk without money and without price."

And it is even so: "great truths are dearly bought;" but this is specially true while yet the day of evil is upon us.

If we would have the joys of discipleship with the glory to follow, we must pay the cost of discipleship.

We often think of the happy days the disciples spent with the Lord; how each morning their hearts were gladdened with the anticipations of the day. They had entered a new world. As they listened to their Master's words, light flashed upon the Old Testament, fresh interpretations of well-known passages were given, and his words were so full of simple wisdom that each day became a delight. At evening they retired thankful for the favours of the day, and expectant for the morrow.

But now and again the Lord gave them a reminder of the cost they must pay. Sometimes they heard him speak of the time of fasting, of sorrow, which must come; and then he told them of the persecution they would meet because they were his disciples. But the Lord was very gentle with them, giving them such food as was "meat in due season," and tempering his sorrows as they were able to bear them. However, as they must be tried to the utmost, the time came when he must speak plainly to them, and our subject to-night is taken from one of those occasions, probably the most solemn, save when they ate together the Last Supper.

The connected incidents must be read in order to get the full meaning. Matthew tells us (16: 13) of our Lord's question to the Apostles—"Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" They answered him. That was but the prelude to the more important, personal, question—"But whom say ye that I am?" At once came Peter's reply—"Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." I think this reply must have given Jesus one of the happiest moments his earthly life afforded. Here was indeed the first flashing of that great light which comes only with the quickening, illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit. Paul says that none but those who are instructed by the Spirit, can say that Jesus is the Lord (1 Cor. 12: 3); and surely none knew that Jesus was the *Christ*, save by that same power of God. Immediately Jesus said to Peter—"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for my Father hath revealed that unto thee." Here, now, was proof that God would continue the work begun by Jesus, and that Jesus was being proved worthy by the Father. Here was the first stone of that number to be quarried out of the earth, those who are to be living stones in the temple of God. Jesus followed the Father's lead; he also conferred a

favour upon Peter, for he said that upon *that truth* his Church should be founded, with Peter's name (a rock) ever associated with it; and that to Peter should be given the keys of the kingdom of heaven —a prophecy which had its fulfilment when Peter "opened" the kingdom to the Jews at Pentecost, and to the Gentiles when Cornelius received the Holy Spirit.

From the time of this incident, Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly of his suffering, and of his death at the hands of the rulers, and of his resurrection. But now comes a startling thing. Peter, full of sympathy for the Lord, alarmed at the thought of their loss, and perhaps with a little pride, certainly with considerable presumption, took upon himself to rebuke the Lord; as if he said: "Lord, you are going a little too far now; this shall not be unto thee." How easy to drop from the highest point of experience yet attained, down to the depths. "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me." Peter was actually putting himself between the Lord and his sacrifice, between Jesus and the Father's will; and the Lord did *more* than rebuke Peter. May we not learn a lesson here, a lesson of carefulness, lest, having a little knowledge of God, we presume upon it even to finding ourselves as enemies of the plan of God?

Jesus, in his loving thought for the Apostles, and for those who should afterwards become his disciples, went on to explain his position. It is as if he said: "What would happen to me if I did not lay down my life in sacrifice as I have shown you? I might do much in the earth, but what should I be profited if I were to gain the whole world and doing so lose my own soul?" This was the temptation put by Satan to our Lord when he suggested that, if Jesus would co-operate with him he could soon have the glory of the whole world. Our Lord now repudiated Peter's suggestion exactly as he had previously repudiated Satan's— "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Luke 4: 8).

And now the Lord fully intimated the cost of discipleship. He said: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. The disciple is to be as his master. If he has the joy of the Lord, he must share also in the sufferings which Christ must suffer before he could enter into his glory. Here is association far closer than the sympathy which usually exists between master and disciple. Both the Lord and the disciples have a community of suffering, and to one common end,—the salvation of the race.

"*If any man will come after me*," said the Lord. Here is something beyond "believing in Jesus." This is far different from the command to repentance. To follow Jesus is not an obligation laid upon any, but is of choice. The difficulties and the cost of discipleship are great, the trials are many; it is a privilege not lightly to be taken. But if any man, privileged of the Father (John 6: 44), will do the will of God, associating himself with the Son of God in his work of witnessing to the world, the way is open for him. To follow Jesus in the sufferings necessary to the accomplishment of his work, is something which God could not reasonably command anyone to do, for the sufferings of Chrst mean shame and even death itself, the penalty of sin, imputed as a sinner. But no privilege higher than this has been opened to man, for it means that if we thus suffer with Him, we shall be glorified with Him.

"*Let him deny himself.*" My brethren, we have had wrong thoughts of self-denial, as we have had of many other things. We have had our week of self-denial, when we denied ourselves the pleasure of some of the little luxuries of life, or when even some of the necessities were cut down. We have foregone some legitimate pleasure, perhaps curtailing or even cutting out a summer holiday, in order that we might have more money or time for some work for the Lord. We are quite sure the Lord is well pleased with all efforts put forth for his praise, and that he gives a corresponding reward. But we point out that such as these acts are not the self-denial which our Lord presents to us here. He does not mean "let a man deny himself of this or that luxury or necessity." His word is "Let him deny *himself*." The Greek word for "deny" is the same as that used when Peter denied the Lord, and we may readily tell the measure of self-denial. You remember that in the time of our Lord's distress, Peter declared that he had no knowledge of Jesus, and denied having been with him. When the matter was pressed upon Peter, "he begun to curse and to swear, saying 'I know not this man of whom ye speak.'" Peter in his weakness utterly repudiated any knowledge of the Lord, or any connection with him. See, then, dear brethren, how a man must deny *himself* if he would be Christ's disciple. He must repudiate himself as utterly as Peter repudiated the Lord.

This is accomplished by the quickened mind discovering the worthlessness of self, and by a perception of the new life, which in Christ is made possible. No man yet hated his own flesh, but it is possible for a man to become a New Creature, and to hate his old self. Nor do we mean by this merely a denial of the old self-will received by nature; a higher thought is contained. There is even in the disciple of Jesus much of the old personality, until

the way of discipleship is learned. We need go no further afield than our present lesson for an example,—How much of *Peter* was there in that earnest, whole-hearted enthusiast? It was just that *self* which Peter needed to deny. But how easy our way to this end has been made! When we come to God in consecration, we are accounted as a New Creature; and as our quickening comes we are made members of the body of Christ, the Church. *Now* we are dead to self, and alive to God. Our life is as part of the Christ. Another mind now operates in us. We no longer have the old mind which, even at its best, was after the flesh, but we have the mind of Christ. We become a new self,—part of the anointed. The old "ego" is lost, while the new is controlled by the mind of Christ.

This means that those "strong points of character," those idiosyncrasies of which we have been rather proud, *must be repudiated;* while we endeavour more and more to come to the unity of the body of the Christ. Probably very many dear brethren have fallen on these points. A brother has thought his peculiarities made him distinguished amongst the brethren, and probably so also did they, but not in the right way nor to a good purpose. Our peculiarity should be only in our Hope, so different from the world's hope. We are peculiar in the world's eyes, but should not be peculiar to each other.

To "deny himself" means, then, that the consecrated child of God must consider himself as part of the anointed class; and that the controlling thought and purpose must be—the glory of God the Father. To what extent must self-denial go? The answer comes, "*Let him take up his cross.*" We have often misunderstood this word; seeking to find a cross, that by "burden-bearing" we might be accounted a disciple of Christ.

We sought out the task which was most difficult, or irksome, or perhaps repugnant; and as we more or less willingly bore "the cross," we felt consoled because we had some proof of discipleship. But the true "cross-bearing" is not an outward thing, any more than the real self-denial is outward. In the days of our Lord, it was customary for the Roman authorities to crucify thieves caught in the act. The disciples would often see little bands of soldiers, accompanying a man bearing his own cross to the place of crucifixion. Our Lord's words must have caused some questioning in the minds of the disciples, questioning that was not fully satisfied till after Calvary, after the spirit had quickened their minds. But they began to discern something of the shame of the cross and of discipleship. There is more in these than martyrdom for the sake of a cause; here is association in the shame of Christ, a conception of the cost of discipleship deeper than that of self-denial. The cross of Christ must be to us as it was to the thief,—it must be that which we take up and carry with us, and which will be the symbol of our destruction. No ordinary work or burden we take up can be this to us. This is surely the reproach of Christ, the reproach which comes upon the anointed, first from the world; and then at last from the Father himself, for we, too, must go outside the camp; we must be outcasts, even as he, our Master, was (Heb. 13: 11). The reproach of Christ is our cross. From the world will come reproach, because we stand aloof from its hopes, and purposes. Already we are considered as unproductive, as doing nothing for the world's good, or for its advancement.

Few there are who now really believe in the cross of Christ as the basis of the world's hope; and our reproach will become heavier as we get further along the way. As our hope of becoming partakers of His sufferings that we may share in his glory, is perceived, surely this cross will bring the last burden! This is how we, like Paul, "die daily," always bearing about with us the stigma of Christ. (Gal. 6.: 17). From God it will come, because we are counted in with our Master. Death is a symbol of the displeasure of God; but so precious to him is the death of the Anointed, Head and Body, that the sacrifice is as a sweet odour—and "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116: 15).

"Let Him Follow Me."

Where, Lord? our hearts ask. We see Jesus, the World's Saviour, the Apostle of God to bring the message of Salvation, presented to his Father's people, and to his own people, but of them despised and rejected. He attracts some to himself (none of the leaders of the people followed him), whose hearts were weary for the fulfilment of the promises to Israel. Yet to these he promised no immediate favours; instead, he bids them expect persecution and tribulation, and now he promises a cross for each. Behold that little company, chosen of God, carrying each his cross to his own crucifixion!

Where do we follow the Lord?—"Let him follow me," first, to self-abnegation. It is impossible for us to realize all that our Lord suffered under the temptation to divert his attention from his Father's will to the immediate prospect of fruitage. Never a heart beat so warmly as his for the fallen race with whom he had come to live and to die; whose Saviour he had come to be. To stand as if apart from, and neglectful of, its needs and woes

except as such were thrust upon his path, must have caused him pain. "He suffered, being tempted." Here was great self-denial of the human outlook; a great self-denial of the mind of the perfect flesh; a consecration to the Father's will, such as can never again be exhibited. The Apostle Paul is the next great example; but in measure this is reserved for every foot-step follower of Jesus,—it is part of his privilege, part of his inheritance. The Apostles thanked the Lord that they were permitted to suffer shame for the name of Jesus, and *we* are counted in with that privileged company.

"Let him follow me" in meekness, in lowliness of heart into self-repudiation. Our old self was very imperfect; it was crooked by nature, and it is no part of the plan of God to put that old self right. Our "old man" is to be crucified, both in the Sense of being put to death as evil, and in our seeking to be ruled by the mind of Christ.

"Let him follow me" to loss of reputation. This is not an easy way in which to follow the Lord. It means a total misapprehension by our friends of our Hope and of our desire for the world; and further, that, so far from seeing that we are laying down our life for the world, they believe we have lost regard for it, and are selfishly holding aloof from the strife against evil. Our reputation goes to the bad; nor can we hope to make our position understood. The Jews did not understand that our Lord was the heir of all their promises, and therefore they had no knowledge of his Sacrifice of these on their behalf; nor did they know that he died as their Sin-offering. The disciple is not above his Lord, and he cannot hope to have his position made clear. Those outside do not see the Church's sacrifice of earthly rights, nor that its members are permitted to fill up "that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ." But the Father knows, the Lord knows, and *they* see their privilege, and that is more than sufficient.

"Let him follow me." Where, Lord, unto death? "Further than that, *into* death." "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" says Paul (Rom. 6: 3). Our call as disciples is not merely a call to fidelity till death shall come upon us. Indeed, as those who are justified and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, there is no reason, apart from discipleship and fellowship of sufferings, why death should come upon us at all. We have been translated from the power of darkness, from the power of death, into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1: 13). As they are justified from all things, there is no more cause of death in the disciples of Jesus, than there was in him their Master. The privilege to share in *his* death is great. With him they go into death; with him they walk "the way of the cross."

And then? "Let him follow me" is still the Master's word; for "if we suffer with him we shall reign with him." This is indeed the end, the *purpose* of this wonderful, glorious plan. God foreordained that the Lord should be the Second Adam, who also should have a Bride; and he has ordained that the disciples of the Lord who follow him, and who have his spirit, shall share with him in the glory of the great work of the restoration, as, by contrast, Eve shared with Adam in bringing the condemnation on the race. But the glory cannot come unless the suffering has been experienced. Here, then, is the result of discipleship, a reward beyond all possible imagination, and entirely beyond our comprehension, except as we have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

What comparison is possible between the cost and the reward! In glory of station the two are not comparable; but in relation to the person a comparison is possible, for the disciple gains the one by reason of the sacrifice of life itself. He gives, willingly, all he has, and God testifies his appreciation by so high a reward.

And now comes our Lord's solemn word of warning. If one has followed Jesus and has thus far become a disciple, the Lord will make plain to him some of the cost he must pay if he would win the great reward of association with Jesus. If, then, having received "life" in order to yield a *sacrifice*, he should withhold that sacrifice, seek to save his life, fearing to drink of the Cup, and to share the Lord's baptism, he shall lose his life. What will such a one be profited if he should gain the whole world, but lose his soul, his life?

Dear brethren, the cost of discipleship is great: but we *have* taken upon ourselves to pay it. Having been justified, sanctified, accepted as disciples through the mercy and favour of God, let us *in the strength of the Lord* pay our vows unto Him, depending upon His grace for every time of need, knowing His grace is sufficient for us; and being assured that if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him. "I will pay my vows now in the presence of all the people." AMEN.

Faithfulness Unto Death.

By Brother J. LIGHTFOOT.

"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2: 10.)

FAITHFULNESS unto death means that we have pledged ourselves to someone to do some service, and that we intend to faithfully carry out that service, and fulfil it in our death.

Faithfulness, as viewed by the world, is much admired and praised; whereas unfaithfulness is looked upon with contempt. To illustrate:—Suppose a man were employed by a master to carry out some important work that required thoughtfulness, cautiousness and continuity for many years. If that man were faithfully doing all that was expected of him to the best of his ability, he would be appreciated, rewarded and praised by all concerned; but if, on the contrary, he became thoughtless, careless and erratic, and seriously jeopardizes the work given him to do, he would be cast off and punished because of his unfaithfulness. Now if faithfulness is appreciated by worldly people (whose standard of righteousness is low) how much more would Jehovah, the Great God of righteousness, reward faithfulness in any service done for him?

Our text is addressed to those of us who have taken advantage of the favour of God in accepting the gift of righteousness through faith in the blood of Christ. We realize that by our faith we are made *holy* and *acceptable* to God. Hearing his invitation through the Apostle Paul (Rom. 12: 1), we presented our bodies a living sacrifice (a reasonable service), and henceforth, not conforming ourselves to this world but being transformed by the renewing of our minds, we go on to prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. Having thus consecrated ourselves to God, he, as it were, gives back to us our life and all we possessed, to use them now in his service till all is consumed, even to death. This brings a very great responsibility, one which we could never of ourselves have undertaken; but we have presented ourselves in sacrifice because we have believed God and are trusting in him to supply all our need. The question is, then, shall we be faithful unto death? If we are, we shall receive the *crown* of life, the highest kind of life, immortality.

Do we often think of the loving-kindness of God? Do we picture him as looking down upon us, his children, pitying and helping us in the various trials and experiences which are necessary to enable us, through the spirit, to mortify the deeds of the flesh, that we as New Creatures may live? When we get our reward, we shall realize that it was all of God's favour that we obtained the prize. All the trials and temptations he sends us crystallize our character, and prepare us for eternity. You know that diamonds are composed of a substance called carbon. Common sugar-candy is also carbon. Yet how easy it is to crush sugar-candy, but how practically impossible it is to crush diamonds! Why is this? The reason is, that the diamond is hard because it was subjected to great heat. In like manner, God sends us fiery trials in order that our characters may crystallize and become strong.

Look back to the beginning of the way. How we appreciated God's goodness and love when we first heard his truth! How we realized that he is indeed a loving, pitying Father! How gently he led us from one trial to another! He would not allow us to be tried above what we were able to bear, but when we went to Him in prayer, he always provided the promised grace sufficient to give us strength to resist. When troubles come upon us, and we realize what a loving Heavenly Father we have, do we not also realize a nearness to the Lord and find sweet peace such as we never found before? So God gently leads us, allowing the fire of affliction to come upon us little by little, and gradually, as we continue faithful in these trying experiences, we become crystallized in character. Not hardened in heart, but hardened in character to the intent

that we may be enabled to bear more pressure, more trial, more affliction even till death.

If all the difficulties which we have already come through had come upon us at the beginning of the way, we should have been overwhelmed. As it was, they loomed up like mountains; but we faced them with a stout heart. We went to God and said, I am not able to surmount this by myself, but I know I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. We proved God to see if he would give what he had promised, and we are very thankful to testify that we have never yet found him unfaithful. But we have had to look at ourselves more than once, however, and ask: "Am I faithful to God?" We want to bring this particularly before our notice this afternoon. Are we faithful to God? Can we say, "Father I have nothing but love in my heart toward thee, love so great that I love thee more than I love myself, more than I love life, more than I love all else?" Can we say we love the Lord Jesus Christ so intently that we are willing to suffer for his sake? Can we look into our hearts and say truthfully, "By God's grace and with the help which he will supply, I do really desire to be faithful, loving and kind, and am willing to endure all things even unto death?"

Are we willing to lay down our lives for the brethren, striving day and night to give forth the Word of Truth? Are we endeavouring to work with our own hands that we may help those who are in need of help? Are we seeking at all times that wisdom which comes from above? For earthly wisdom is worse than useless in this life of sacrifice upon which we have entered. The wisdom from above not only teaches us to consider the object of our sacrifice, but also to look into the motive of everything which leads up to that object. It enables us to decide whether our doing this or that may help, or injure the brethren, — whether our first thoughts in connection with any work on their behalf, are the best to act upon. But when we believe we have the leading of the Lord in any matter, let us be prompt to do it even at great sacrifice to ourselves.

How can we lay down our lives for the brethren? In this way: by being faithful to God, to Christ, and to each other. Can we look into our hearts and say: "There is not one individual in all the world whom I hate!" If we can say this, then can we add: "There is not one individual in all the world whom I do not love?" The Lord said: "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. . . But love ye your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest, for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." The world's standard is "Do unto others as they do unto you," but the Lord's standard is "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also likewise to them" (Luke 6: 31–35).

How can we prove to ourselves that we love our enemies, that we love the brethren, that we love the Lord, and that we love our Heavenly Father with supreme love? Are we willing to die on behalf of all those whom we love? Paul wrote to the Romans that he would be willing to be accursed (to suffer punishment) for his brethren's sake, if only he could bring them to Christ. That was his position. What a spirit of love and self-sacrifice! It was the same spirit which our Master had. He laid down his life daily for his brethren, the Jews, using up his vitality and energy in healing and blessing them. In this way he consumed the sacrifice, the merit of which he has applied for us. We also are told to lay down our lives for the brethren, using our vitality and energy in blessing them and giving them the glad message of the glorious hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5: 2). Thus we consume our sacrifice, which the Lord, our High Priest, will apply on behalf of the world when the sacrifice of the last member of the church is complete.

Our Lord during his ministry was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He was not tempted as a sinful human being, but as a New Creature. His temptation came from three directions—the world, the flesh, and the devil. He overcame them. Each one of us is tempted in the same way, and the Lord knows how to help us also to overcome. You remember what he says to us, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 14: 27; 16: 33).

As the trials and testings become more and more difficult, our characters gradually become harder and harder, more settled, rooted and grounded in the truth. We are being cut and polished as God's jewels. It is only by remaining faithful under all these trials and difficulties, and being rightly exercised by them that we can expect to receive the reward which God is offering to those only who are faithful unto death.

We are spoken of as soldiers of Christ and enlisted, as it were, in our king's service. We pledged ourselves to fight for our country (not the earthly, but the heavenly country) against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Now, when a soldier enlists, he is put under officers who give him instructions and

put him through certain exercises and drill to fit him for the position he is to fill. So we, as soldiers of Christ, are also placed under officers—Christ and those whom God hath set in authority in the Church. Their office is to give us our instructions, and the right kind of exercises. They tell us how to exercise our minds and how to make use of our opportunities so as to fit ourselves for service in God's kingdom.

A book of instructions also is given to the earthly soldier, that he may study the various forms of drill in order to become efficient. The Bible is our book of instructions, which enables us to decide whether the teaching we receive from our officers is according to the book of rules. Paul says, "Prove all things, and accept only that which is good." We require, therefore, to learn this book thoroughly, and to be conversant with all the rules contained in it, and so make progress, making ourselves perfect in every good work.

A soldier has a standard with an emblem upon it representing some truth. The British Union Jack, the flag which represents the union of England, Scotland, and Ireland, has three crosses, one within the other, representing patron saints who came to the relief of oppressed ones. The thought, therefore, behind the Union Jack is "the relief of the oppressed." We Christian soldiers also have a standard with the emblem, Christ upon the Cross, signifying "the relief of the oppressed," the relief of those who are oppressed by that great dragon, the Adversary. As we look upon that standard and realize the love there manifested for us, and the standard of righteousness which it brings to our minds, does it not instil into us a desire to be faithful to God, faithful to his cause?

But it is not only necessary that we should be rightly exercised in all these matters, it is also necessary that we should put on the armour of God, and see that we have it *all* on, for our king has provided it. Above all, let us take the shield of faith wherewith we may quench every fiery dart of the Adversary. As we endeavour to be faithful to our Lord, to stand up for righteousness and truth, to show our love of the standard which God has raised for us, we shall find abundant use for our shield, because it is certain that we shall be attacked by the Adversary, the flesh, and the world.

Our human nature will demand its rights. The old nature will say "Why are you adopting such extreme methods? Could you not take up some hobby? It would refresh and divert your mind"; or "Why not study science for a awhile, or go to a theatre or some place of amusement?" or "you seldom take time for a holiday; your health will suffer." The New Creature answers, "My thoughts and affections are now set on the things above, and as a New Creature in Christ I have not the time nor desire to satisfy my fleshly claims." All the things that have been mentioned are of the world, and remind us that our old man is not *actually* dead, but simply *reckoned* so. Let us do as the Apostle says, "If you through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, we shall live." If we allow the New Creature to predominate and bring into subjection everything that is human, and day by day gradually mortify, rot away, fleshly deeds and human ambitions, then the New Creature will grow strong, and will get to such a condition of development, that God will bring it to the birth and clothe it with a glorious body like our Lord's. He will give to that one a crown of life. But if, on the other hand, we allow the deeds of the flesh to predominate, what happens? That New Creature which has been begotten in us by the Word of Truth, the new mind, will gradually become squeezed out of existence. It will not grow, because it will have no room. We will be too full of self, of the things of this life, having failed to set our affections on things above. We would be traitors, because, having pledged ourselves to a heavenly kingdom, we will have given ourselves away to the Adversary. A traitor is punished with death. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die" (Rom. 8: 13).

But we know that the Lord is persuaded of better things of us, dear brethren. We feel sure we are all trying to be "faithful unto death." We are trying to bring into subjection everything that pertains to this human existence; for have we not all given up hope of *this* life, to lay hold upon the hope set before us? Did we not pledge ourselves to sacrifice every worldly hope and ambition? We did not give it up for nothing, for God gave us exceeding great and precious promises that, if we would be faithful, we might be partakers of the Divine nature. As we see the greatness of the reward which God is offering to us, and as we realize the privilege we have in carrying out God's work, we think of our Lord's words, "It it more blessed to give than receive." The work that will be given to us will be to minister to the wants of the poor groaning creation. Surely that will be a glorious work. That of itself should be a great impetus, something to make us zealous in the service of God that we might please him. In order to be faithful we must be *full of faith*.

How does the shield of faith quench the fiery darts of the Adversary? You have been striving for a long time to show your love for the brethren, and to do good to everybody as you have opportunity

especially to the household of faith. Have you, in your endeavours to do this, been evil spoken of? Has a different aspect been given to your words, and have you been accused of this and that? Have you felt very downcast, and find yourself beginning to wonder if there is anything in you at all? Have you ever felt that your efforts do not appear to bring anyone into the Truth? If so, remember that even though your efforts seemingly do not bring anyone into the truth now, they will bear fruit some day. Remember also that it is a great privilege to have been used to speak the truth. We shall probably not know until we are glorified just how much the Lord has used us. I knew a brother who was lacking in faith. He did not see that God was blessing his efforts to spread the Truth, and he was inclined to think it was useless to try further. I told him that he should have faith that, when he had planted, God would give the increase. We need to have faith all the way, right up to the end, even though all the evidence of our work, so far as we can see, seems merely to be the opposition of our friends, those whom we have dearly loved, and do still love.

Why do we believe that in a few short years the whole condition of things will be changed, that all the rule and authority now in existence will be laid low, and Christ will be reigning instead? How do we know this? We have accepted it *by faith*. How do we know we are consecrated to God, and how do we know he wants us? *By faith*, based upon the Word of God. Unless we are full of faith, "faithful unto death," we will not receive the crown of life. Many of us do not naturally possess the necessary qualities. We like changes; we lack continuity. If we trust him, God will help us to develop that quality of perseverance and constancy to such an extent, that we will be able to remain faithful all the way through this life. Those qualities which we do not possess naturally, the grace of God working in our hearts will make up to us in some other way, so that we shall come off more than conquerors. We have not yet reached the end of all our experiences, the end does not come until death. Do not think it strange when still more trials come upon us the further we proceed into the evil day. We can only expect false brethren to arise, and we can only expect to be more evil spoken of. All these are fiery trials.

It may be that a brother whom we love very much, one who has consecrated up to a certain point, gradually begins to develop pride in his heart. Like the seed that is sown, quite a growth takes place before it becomes manifest that it has taken root. It is so small at first that we did not notice it; but the root has gradually grown till the plant of pride has a deep hold in his heart; and by and by it comes to the surface and so becomes apparent to others. Many may have depended upon this brother and have trusted him so much, that they may be carried away with him, thus showing that they have been leaning upon *him* instead of upon God and his Word. We should be so firmly grounded in the truth, that even though the one who has been instrumental in bringing us into the truth, should latterly leave its service and present some false ideas of his own, we shall nevertheless be able to stand *firm*. These are the trials which try us most, trials amongst ourselves. We should endeavour to draw together in the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," and to love one another.

We require to know something about the character of our Heavenly Father, as well as his purposes concerning ourselves and his truth before we can develop his love. The love of God is unselfish. It loves because it loves to love. It does not love because of what it is going to get, but loves for love itself. God loved us when we were enemies; when there was no just reason why he should love us. He loved us because *He is Love*. We must be conformed to the image of his Son. We must endeavour to be holy as God is holy. We know that our earthly body will never acquire that state of perfection where it can be said to be holy in the actual sense; but we can be holy-minded; we can see to it that we have no desire to do wrong in any form.

May this be the spirit of each of us; may we endeavour to be faithful not only to God, but to the brethren, and even to our enemies. Yes, and may we be faithful even to our own selves—"To thine own self be true." How easy it is for us to deceive ourselves. Let us search our hearts daily. Let us watch as well as pray, lest we enter into temptation. Unless we watch and pray continually, unless we have circumcised our hearts, we are likely to be deceived. Let us lay our hearts bare before our Heavenly Father, and see whether we are carrying out that which we have promised to do. Let us see if we are faithful, if we are willing to continue faithful unto death. God grant we may all have sufficient grace to enable us to say in our hearts, "Thy will be done." Even though he may lead us through long dark ways, let us trust him where we cannot trace him. Has he not done all that he promised? *He* has been faithful, and he has told us to trust him, come what may; therefore, let *us* be faithful, even unto death, that by his grace we may receive the glorious Crown of Life. AMEN.

The Ascent of the Mountain of God.

The Necessity of Keeping Close to the Master.

(By Brother JOHN EDGAR.)

THIS subject is of primary importance to us. Whatever may be the stage we have reached in our journey, the one thing needful for all of us is to keep close to the Master, because by doing so, we shall become more like him, and more and more sure of reaching the summit of the mountain of God. We are a nation of mountain climbers. I am not referring to the British nation; I mean the nation whose citizenship is in heaven, the holy nation, those who are redeemed to God by the blood of the lamb out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and who are to be made unto our God kings and priests and to reign on the earth (Rev. 5: 9, 10).

The mountain we are climbing is the mountain of God, Mount Zion, and our Guide is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Master as well as our Guide, for he bought us with his own precious blood.

As mountaineers we are to adopt the usual methods of mountain climbing. We shall require a guide, mountaineering clothes, a knapsack, an alpenstock, and we must have a stout cord to bind us to our Guide and to one another. All these are necessary to climbing the narrow way which in this Gospel Age is the only way, and we will consider them first.

The first thing that is necessary is to take off the filthy rags of our own righteousness (Isa. 64: 6), and put on Christ's robe of righteousness. Without it, we can never hope to attain the summit. The other garments which we require are mentioned in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on the things of the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." To this end the Apostle exhorts us to *put off* anger, wrath, malice, etc., seeing we have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another." These additional things, the graces of the spirit, we must begin to put on even at the commencement of the ascent, and we shall require to put on more and more of them as we go up the mountain side.

But there is something additional. The 14th verse continues, "And above all these things." This word "above" does not mean "more important than," as might be implied in the Authorized Version. The Diaglott translates it "besides," but that is certainly incorrect. The Greek word is "epi" and means "upon." What we require is a girdle to bind the various garments together, and this girdle is love. "Above (or upon) all these things, put on *love*, which is the bond (or girdle) of perfectness." This girdle is essential. It binds and keeps right all the other graces. The other parts of our mountaineering outfit are the alpenstock and the knapsack. The former represents the power of God, and the latter the Word of God. The knapsack contains the *bread* of life, the *water* of truth, the *wine* of comfort and exhortation, and the *oil* of joy for mourning. Thus in our outfit the four attributes of God's character are all represented, the wisdom

of God by the knapsack, the justice of God by the robe of righteousness, the power of God by the alpenstock, and the love of God by the girdle.

The girdle not only binds together the various graces of the spirit of which it is the chief, but the same girdle of love also binds us to Christ our guide, and to one another. If we were to attempt to ascend this mountain alone, we should find it impossible. We must have our Guide with us, and probably also some fellow-travellers. In Eccl. 4: 9–12, we read: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour: for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up." If we attempt to go up alone, and fall, we should not be able to raise ourselves, but when we have the Lord beside us, he will help us up, and then both he and we shall have a good reward for our labour. "Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone." The reason why the nominal Christian is lukewarm, is because he has not the Lord with him in his creed bed. "And if one prevail against him"—supposing Satan or one of his agents were to attack us when we are alone, he would prevail against us,—but "two shall withstand him," my Lord and I together. "And a three-fold cord is not quickly broken." I am not sure what Solomon meant by this cord which is not easily broken, but probably it is the cord of love, the bond of perfect love, the bond of perfectness, which binds us to Christ and to our fellow-travellers, and by which we are enabled to retain our footing and ascend the mountain of God.

The wise man says that this cord is threefold. Cords are composed of a great number of threads gathered into strands, and these strands are woven tightly round each other. The girdle of perfectness which binds the graces of the spirit and keeps us close to the Master, is composed of three strands woven round one another, and it appears to me that these three strands are the precepts of God, the promises of God, and the prayers of the saints, the three "P's," we might call them, for they all begin with the letter P. We cannot succeed with any one of these alone, nor even with two; we must have all the three interwoven with each other, and operating in unison in order to keep us close to the Master, and enable us to reach the summit of the mountain. If we examine these three strands, the precepts, the promises and the prayers, we shall find that there is love in every thread, and so the whole girdle is the cord of love.

(*a*) First, all the *precepts* of God, individually and collectively, are love. Love is the fulfilling of the law. (*b*) Again, who can study the many exceeding great and precious *promises* of God without perceiving that they all represent love, the love of God for us, drawing out our love for him! (*c*) And then, what are the *prayers* of the saints but love? Is it not our love for, as well as our trust in God and his Truth, that brings out our prayers to him for ourselves and for our brethren, and do not our Heavenly Father's answers to our prayers increase our love and our trust?

(*a*) *The precepts of God* are also the precepts of Christ. Jesus said, "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14: 23, 24). The way to keep close to the Master is to love him and keep his words (precepts). Remember that "Love is the fulfilling of the law." This forms an important test by which we may decide whether we have properly grasped and followed the leading of the divine precepts. If we are striving to understand and obey some particular precept and the result of obeying it is love, we may feel sure we are right. But if the result is not love, then we are wrong, either in our interpretation of the precept, or in our method of giving effect to it.

Let me give you an example. You will find it in John 13: 14, 15. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Nothing could be more explicit than that. It may be claimed that if we do not wash one another's feet, we are not obeying the Lord. In the East, where Jesus spoke these words, the people wore sandals, and their feet soon became hot and dusty. Hence, the custom was (and I suppose still is), when anyone arrived at a house, for one of the servants to take off the sandals and wash the traveller's feet. It must have been soothing and refreshing. That is what Jesus did for his disciples, and what he asked them to do for one another. The humble service must have been appreciated, especially because of the love and humility which prompted it. But supposing we in the West were to attempt to carry out this injunction according to the letter, the result would not be love, we should simply be a nuisance. This clearly proves that in this instance, we should do wrong to obey Christ according to the letter. Our obedience to this precept should be according to the spirit, that is to say, we ought to wash one another's feet in the sense of humbly and lovingly serving one another, "in honour preferring one

another." "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20: 27).

Of all Christ's precepts the one to which he drew special attention, was the "new commandment." The old commandment was to love our neighbours as ourselves. The new commandment is to love the brethren as Christ loved us, that is to say, more than ourselves, to "lay down our lives for the brethren" (John 13: 34; 1 John 3: 16). This means that we must give up our time, talents, influence, energies, everything we have, at the expense of our comfort, health and life, for our brethren in Christ. This was not asked of the Jews, nor will it be asked of the world in the Age to follow this, but it is asked of us who desire to be followers of Christ Jesus.

But while endeavouring to bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ, we must be careful to respect each others' liberty of conscience. We must judge not, that we be not judged. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand . . . Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Rom. 14: 4-13). The law of love demands that we should seek the truth and obey it ourselves, and do our best to tell it meekly and lovingly to others, but it also demands that we should neither endeavour to force our opinions on others nor despise or speak ill of them, should they fail to think and act as we do. This is one of the chief tests that the brethren are undergoing in this evil day. Let us pray for one another that we shall humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

So far we have considered only one of the strands of the cord of love which keeps us close to the Master and to one another. May we all be able to say with the Master, "I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart," not within my head only, but deeper down within my heart."

(*b*) Woven closely round this strand there is another, the bond of *the divine promises*, without which the other would be insufficient. If we were to trust merely to our endeavours to obey God's precepts, we should be like Israel under the Law. That which was ordained unto life would be found to be unto death; but, thanks be to God, we are not under the Law but under Grace. The promises of God are so interwoven with his precepts that we find it difficult, impossible in fact, to separate them. I advise you, dear brethren, not to make the attempt. One without the other will prove of no avail to us. Both of them represent love, and the one helps the other.

The threads of this strand are numerous and of different kinds. We are learning and appreciating them more as we ascend the mountain of God.

(1) Many of the promises are for the purpose of assuring us that *God does not expect perfection of conduct* on our part. "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103: 14). With the precepts not to sin, we have the promise of the covering merit of our Redeemer's blood. With the precepts bidding us suffer and die with Christ, we have the promise that we are "accepted in the Beloved," accepted in Christ, not accepted for ourselves.

(2) Knowing our various weaknesses and our tendency to lack of zeal, our Heavenly Father has given us many promises which have for their object *the rousing of our flagging energies and the exciting of our hopes.* Coupled with the precept to be faithful unto death, there is the gracious promise that a crown of life will be given us. The prospect of this great joy should stir us up to greater zeal and faithfulness. Again, we are told to overcome evil with good, and for our encouragement we are promised if overcomers, power over the nations and a seat on the throne with Christ.

(3) Still others of the promises are for the sake of *giving us comfort and peace now in the midst of trials and tribulation, enabling us to realize that God is protecting us.* Amongst these are such glorious promises as: "All things work together for good to those who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8: 28); and the parting legacy of our Lord Jesus: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14: 27). The world's idea of the right method of securing peace is by so arranging everything that there will be financial, social and political prosperity. That is why the great armies and navies are maintained, and why laws are passed and everything possible is done to secure good trade and increase the confidence of the people in the government. But with all its efforts, though the kings and statesmen are crying "Peace, peace," there is no peace. On the contrary, unrest and discontent are on the increase. But Jesus said: "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Christ's method of giving peace is referred to indirectly in John 16: 33. "These words I have spoken unto you that ye may have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." The Lord's method is not by granting earthly prosperity, but by permitting trials and difficulties to come upon us. The purpose is to enable us to realize our

own weakness, so that we may learn to place entire reliance on the Lord and not on self. When we are able to say with the Apostle, "I have learnt in whatsoever state I am in therewith to be content," then the peace of God will rule in our heart, and we shall be of good cheer, realizing that Christ has overcome the world, and that we are "accepted in the Beloved."

We are also assured that we shall never be tempted above that we are able to bear; that the weaker we are the more strength the Lord will use on our behalf, and that the victory does not depend upon our strength, nor on our personal righteousness, but upon our faith. We have God's word also that he will finish the good work which he has begun in us, provided only that we retain our faith.

These are only a few among the many "exceeding great and precious promises whereby we might become partakers of the divine nature." Like the precepts, they all spell the same word,—LOVE. They show the love of God for us, and draw out our love for him.

(*c*) The third strand is composed of *the prayers of the saints.* If we were to trust to the other two strands alone, the cord would snap. God has so arranged his plan that the prayers of the saints are just as essential as the precepts and the promises. The three strands are all necessary to form this cord of love, and "a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

Possibly God could have arranged matters differently, so that whether we prayed or not, we should prosper spiritually, but he has not done so.

(*a*) One reason is that *prayer brings home to us our dependence upon him,* the creator and sustainer of all things, and the giver of every good and perfect gift. It is only he who humbles himself under the mighty hand of God who will be exalted in due time.

(*b*) Another reason is that *by prayer we are brought into direct communion with the Lord.* That is one of the most precious reasons why God instituted prayer. Our hearts should be full of thankfulness to him that we are permitted to draw near with the endearing name "Father" on our lips.

(*c*) Still another reason is that we may pray for one another. This *strengthens our sympathy with the brethren* in their trials and difficulties. Nothing binds us closer together than our prayers for the brethren and the knowledge that they are praying for us. We ought to make daily use of this privilege and not only so, but we ought to let the others know that we are praying for them. It encourages them.

(*d*) A fourth reason why *God has instituted prayer is in order that we might try to search out his will,* so that we may pray according to it. He knows what is best for us. John gives us the blessed assurance that if we ask anything according to God's will, he hears us, and if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him (1 John 5: 14, 15). That is the full assurance of faith. When we search what is God's will concerning us, we find that "This is the will of God, even our sanctification." Our prayers should not therefore be so much for temporal earthly things, as for eternal spiritual things. God will supply the temporal necessities without our asking. He wants us to be more concerned about our spiritual needs.

(*e*) Again, *by earnest prayer we show our desire for the things we ask, and so our hearts and minds are brought into the proper attitude to receive them.*

If we get a thing without asking for it we are apt not to appreciate it, but if we ask for it, especially if we ask again and again for it, not only does this show that we really want it, but *our desire for it is increased.*

(f) Lastly, when sooner or later our prayer is answered in the Lord's way, and the Lord's way is always best for him and for us, *our faith is strengthened in the loving-kindness of our God, and in the power of his might.*

Cornelius was a beautiful example of the power of prayer. He was the first Gentile to be received into the body of Christ. Till that time the Jews were exclusively favoured with the opportunity of becoming partakers of the High Calling, while the Gentiles were "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." When the angel of the Lord was sending Peter to Cornelius in order that Cornelius might receive the Holy Spirit and be privileged to become a partaker of the High Calling, he said to Cornelius: "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God."

Having considered these points; the clothing, the knapsack, the alpenstock, and the cord which binds us to Christ and to one another, we shall now consider whether we have reasonable grounds for faith in our Guide.

The Qualifications of the Guide.

(1) Has Christ the necessary *experience?* Yes, our Master knows every inch of the way. He has trod it himself, for we are told "it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2: 10). Through the bitter lessons of practical experience, he is well acquainted with all the diffi-

culties of the way. He was "in all points tempted like as we (the members of his body) are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4: 15), and thus "in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2: 18).

(2) A man may have trod the way and so have experience, but this does not necessarily imply that he is wise. Accordingly, a second necessary qualification in an efficient guide is *wisdom*, so that we may depend upon his judgment at all times and in all circumstances. Has Christ the necessary wisdom? Many tell us that the way Christ is leading us is the wrong way. They say, if you follow Christ in being humble and meek, denying yourself, giving up all earthly ambitions, and laying down your life in sacrifice, you will be very foolish. The Evolutionists tell us that man is simply evolving according to the "law of the survival of the fittest." The "law of the survival of the fittest" implies pushing others to the wall in order to succeed. There is not much comfort for the weak and helpless in that doctrine. The Papists tell us that we have to depend upon the Pope and the authority of the church. Surely a broken reed this to lean upon! Faith-healers and Christian scientists say that we should concentrate our attention on the health of our bodies and minds. Poor comfort this for those who are longing to please God and realize their own insufficiency. But it would be tedious even to enumerate all the various plans. You will find that they all direct you to yourself or to your fellow men. God's plan is best. He has given us Christ as our guide that we may follow in his steps. If you follow him you will never be deceived, for "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2: 3).

(3) The next thing is his *strength.* You know how a guide has to help tourists in dangerous places, and to raise them when they fall. Is our guide strong enough? Yes, he is mighty to save. "He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 6: 25). Christ says: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28: 18).

(4) Is Christ *trustworthy?* Undoubtedly he is. He has guided many already, and he will guide us too. He who, because of his love for us, suffered for our sakes to the extent of giving up his life for us, surely he will lead us to glory if we are willing; and has not our Heavenly Father said: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee?"

(5) Then we know *he is willing* to undertake the duties of the important office. We need not ask the question. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Rom. 5: 8, 9). Has not God said to us: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psa. 32: 8), and he has appointed Jesus the Captain of our salvation.

The Ascent.

Let us now talk about the ascent. Do you remember the time when we were down in the depth of the valley of the shadow of death, and Christ took us by the hand and asked to be permitted to become our guide. You remember the first thing he did was to get us to cast off all the filthy rags of our own righteousness, and clothe us with the mountaineering suit, the white robe of *his* righteousness, the only covering that can protect us while climbing the mountain of God. God forbid that any of us should be so ungrateful and so foolish as to throw it off! We should surely die the second death if we did. Then he bound the knapsack of the word or wisdom of God on our shoulders, putting into this knapsack, as I have already said, the bread of life, the water of truth, the wine of comfort and exhortation, and the oil of joy.

You remember how we eagerly grasped with mind and heart the divine precepts and promises and the privilege of prayer, which together form the threefold cord of love, and helped to gird ourselves with it to our Master and to one another, in order that we might keep close to him and to each other, and so make sure to gain the summit of the mountain of God. We did not at first discern all the threads that make up the three strands of this golden cord, but we are seeing them and putting them to the test day by day as we are climbing higher.

Lastly, he placed an Alpenstock in our hand, called the power of God; and he told us that it was the mercy and loving kindness of our Heavenly Father which prompted the giving of the robe, the knapsack, the cord and the alpenstock.

When we had our outfit, we began the ascent. It was necessary for us to put forth some effort; but praise the Lord, we do not require to rely upon our own strength and righteousness. His grace is sufficient for us. *When we are weak, then we are strong.* There is no power like the power of the Lord for strengthening the feeble knee.

I suppose everyone of us can remember the beginning of the ascent. I am sure we all rejoiced at the prospect of being free from the valley of the shadow of death and of reaching the glory of the mountain top. We were full of confidence in the Lord and the power of his might. Some of us

rejoiced more than others. Some of us, perhaps, had a little confidence in our own strength, though now, I trust, we have learned better. Others of us, while rejoicing, did not rejoice sufficiently, because we saw so plainly our own weaknesses and we were fearful of ever successfully climbing the dizzy height. We were looking more to self than to our guide. However, we all did rejoice and were anxious that others should rejoice with us.

Have you ever climbed a high mountain? The higher you ascend, the purer and rarer the air becomes, and when you fill your lungs with it and admire the beautiful scenery, your heart goes out to the Lord for gratitude, and you "cannot keep from singing." That is how *we* feel. While we are ascending this high mountain of God, we feel often like bursting forth into "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in our heart to the Lord." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psa. 103: 1, 2).

It is only when we are going along the right way that we feel like that. If we lose the way, then it is not pleasant by any means. We do not feel like singing then. But there is no reason why we should lose the way. No doubt it is narrow, but if we take a firm grasp of our alpenstock, see that our robe is unspotted, and make sure that we are firmly bound by, and are following the leading of the threefold cord of love, we shall not go astray. "Greater is he that is for us than all that be against us." So long as we are rejoicing in the Lord, and not in self, we can feel that we are safe and that victory lies before us.

Although the path is all narrow and difficult, some parts are more difficult than others. In some places we have to force our way through thorny thickets of sneers and ridicule which tear into our flesh and make us wince. Again, we are sometimes compelled to climb over or go round rocks of distresses and perplexities. At other times we require to creep along with a great mass of affliction overhanging the narrow way, and seemingly ready to fall on us and crush us. Now and again an avalanche of tribulation comes upon us, or we may have to pass through a blinding hailstorm of persecution or a thunderstorm of trouble. But if we keep close to the Master we are quite safe. Occasionally we find a yawning crevasse of doubt in front of us, or a bottomless precipice of despair at our side. If we look down, we get giddy and may fall. What we should do in such circumstances is to turn our eyes away from the danger and look to Jesus. We should take a firmer grip of our alpenstock and our cord of love, and with the Lord's assistance the difficulties of the way will be overcome. In all circumstances of difficulty and danger, we shall experience great comfort and be much refreshed if we open our knapsack, the Word of God, and while partaking of its contents, praise the Lord for his bountiful provision for all our needs.

Occasionally our guide seems to get out of our sight or to be too high above us and we are apt to lose heart, but if we grasp the cord and follow its leading, our faith will be rewarded. We shall see our guide once more, and we shall find that he was near us all the time, and that it was only the feeling of faintness which obscured our vision.

You are aware that in some high mountains glaciers are met with. You know how the guide does in these cases? He digs out a foothold for each step of the way. That is what Christ, our guide, had to do. While at all times it is advisable, in these slippery places it is imperative that we should watch carefully for the footprints of the Master, and place our feet firmly and securely in them, step by step. If we do this, the love and power of God will sustain us, and we shall not need to fear.

Now and again we see some of our companions slip with more or less disastrous results; or we may slip ourselves, and when we do, what a fright it gives us! What discomfort and pain! What a feeling of faintness and helplessness comes over us! And how solicitous our Guide and our companions are for us! How they brace themselves and draw us up to safety again by the threefold cord of love, beseeching us to keep firm hold of it all the time! When we are very faint, our Guide hooks his alpenstock, the power of God, into our girdle, and draws us up to the place of safety. If any of us rebel and loosen our girdle we shall be in danger of death, but if we attend to the divine precepts, and take encouragement from the exceeding great and precious promises, and lay hold of the Lord by prayer, we shall soon be drawn up to the place of safety, and walk once more in the narrow way.

After we have recovered our footing, we feel shaken by the fall; our knees tremble and our head and heart feel faint, but by the help of the alpenstock and the golden cord, the cord of love, we soon regain our confidence in the Lord.

It is also at such times the privilege of some of our fellow-travellers to anoint our bruises with the oil of joy, to offer us a refreshing drink of the water of truth, and to sustain us with a small portion of the bread of life and wine of comfort and exhortation. What a glorious privilege we have in assisting each other!

When we have partaken of these, our first feeling is gratitude for the loving kindness of our God, and for the sympathy and help of our brethren. We thank God that we are back in the place of safety, and we show our love and appreciation to the brethren for their help. But it is right for us to reflect on the cause of our fall in order to draw from it the necessary lessons. Generally it has been neglect of some of the usual precautions, neglect of the necessity to hold the cord (precepts, promises and prayers, the three P's), or the alpenstock (the power of God), or neglect of keeping our garment unspotted, or of walking carefully in the footsteps of the Master. It may be that we have been disheartened through lack of faith. We may have been thinking more of the difficulties and dangers of the way than of the love and power and wisdom of God. It may be, again, that the slip has been made through over-confidence in self or in a fellow-traveller. It is well to have confidence in each other, to trust and love and honour one another, and this the more we see in them the likeness of the Master. But we must never be betrayed into placing more confidence in our fellow men than in God. This is an important thing, dear brethren. No matter how learned a brother may be, or how much of the spirit of Christ he may show, God forbid that we should permit ourselves, like many in the nominal system, to place man's word above the Word of God. We are never to worship man. "One is your Master, even Christ, all ye are brethren." Sometimes God allows leaders to make mistakes in order to test us in that way.

In times of difficulty and distress the proper thing for us to do is to feel a spirit of dependence on the Lord, the expression of which will be the language of prayer from the heart, uttered or unuttered. As the Psalmist says: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses" (Psa. 107: 6). The weaker we are in self, the stronger we can be in the Lord. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee with the right hand of my righteousness, for I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee: Fear not, I will help thee" (Isa. 41: 10–13). With promises like these in the Scriptures, and they abound there, we need not fear, however difficult the way may appear.

Sometimes we are apt to become impatient and think we are unnecessarily long in reaching the summit, or that the difficulties we are experiencing on the way are too numerous, too great or too long-continued; but to feel like that, would show a want of confidence in our God. He knows what is best for our spiritual growth, and for the interests of the truth. "Wait thou upon the Lord, be of good courage, and he will strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord" (Psa. 27: 14).

But the way is not all full of such difficulties. The Lord knows that we require breathing-spaces on the hill-side. Sometimes we get to a part where we can rest and refresh ourselves with the truth, and enjoy each other's society for a little while—times of prosperity. We rejoice when we get to these places, but even there we should continue to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. Satan knows that in times like these we are apt to become less careful and slip unawares. But "the Lord upholdeth all that fall and raiseth up all those that are bowed down." "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Psa. 145: 14, 8, 9). If we find our feet giving way under us, we should call on the Lord, for "the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth" (verse 18). We need not fear. All we require is faith.

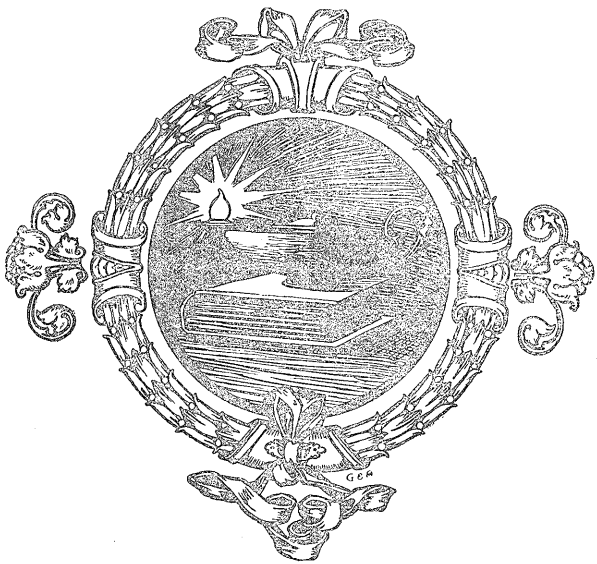
While we are up here near the summit of Mount Zion, we see opposite us on the other side of Jordan, the many-peaked mountain of Bashan (Psa. 68: 15, 16, Rotherham), and we recognize that the names of its highest peaks are Roman Catholicism, Greek Catholicism, Episcopalianism, Lutheranism, and Presbyterianism. Christendom has thought to establish the mountain of God on earth by its own wisdom and power; but we know by the sure word of prophecy that it will soon fall. As we look, we see the foundations shaking and the mountain beginning to move; and all thinking men see the same. But while men's hearts are "failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth," we are not moved, for the rock on which we are standing will never be shaken. Mount Zion is "the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever." It will never be moved.

As we see the fulfilment of prophecy and realize that the time is at hand for the great earthquake, our hearts are sore for those brethren who are still in bondage. We long for them to strike off their chains with the Lord's help, and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and this longing makes us more and more zealous in our endeavours to obey the Lord's request: "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psa. 50: 5).

Soon we shall reach the summit where the wedding supper is being prepared, for our Guide is to be our Bridegroom. Soon the Bride will have made

herself ready, and the marriage of the Lamb will be celebrated. Let us pray for one another and so serve one another, that we all may be found worthy to be members of the Bride. Then when we are united with Christ in glory, drinking the wine anew with him in his and our kingdom, we shall be close, very close to the Master, and that for ever. Only a few years more and our climbing will be over. With some of us it may be only a few days or weeks. Pray the Lord that we shall all be faithful unto death so that we may get the crown of life (immortality), and never be separated from Jesus. Remember, dear brethren, that the Lord is faithful who has promised. If we become separated from Christ, the separation will be due entirely to our own wilfulness, *nothing else*. As the Apostle declares: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

These trials must come to us, for it is only through much tribulation that we can enter the Kingdom; but if our faith is firm, *that faith which worketh by love*, these trials instead of separating us from the love of Christ, will make us see our own weakness and draw us the closer to him. As the Apostle goes on to say: "Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8: 35–39). AMEN.



The Acceptable Time of Jehovah.

(By Brother W. CRAWFORD.)

"Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of Salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of his people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." (Isaiah 49: 8.)

ONE fact brought to our attention in the Scriptures, is God's remarkable exactness as a *time* keeper. Again and again we find this thought emphasized, that God is working exactly according to time. Thus, the Apostle tells us in Galatians, 4: 4—"When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son"; and again in Romans, 5: 6—"In due time, Christ died for the ungodly." So too, we find the same thought expressed in our text for this evening, Isaiah, 49: 8—"Thus saith the Lord, In an *acceptable time* have I heard thee, and in a *day of salvation* have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of his people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages."

The prophet, undoubtedly, is here referring not to any time in general, but to some particular time or period, during which it was appropriate to carry out a certain feature of God's plan. This shows us the importance of "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" as exhorted by the Apostle (2 Tim. 2: 15). But in order to do so and to understand the Word aright, the Apostle intimates that it will require some study on our part, some searching and care, as well as a due appreciation of the truth in our hearts. Thus, the Psalmist declares: "Light (truth) is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart" (Psa. 97: 11).

With those thoughts in mind, then, and with due appreciation of the truth in our hearts, let us approach our text and see what the Lord may have to tell us regarding his "acceptable time."

TO WHOM DOES THE PROPHET REFER?

Is he speaking of the Jew, or of the Gentile, or of everybody in general? No, dear friends, we think not. Let us look for a moment at the 7th verse of this 49th chapter of Isaiah—"Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee." Is there anyone in the world to whom these words might fittingly apply? Or is there any historical personage concerning whom, in a special sense, they might be said to be true? Looking back through history we might find some wicked character such as a Judas or a Nero, who was despised of men and abhorred by the nation, whose name has become a byeword and a stench in the nostrils of society, standing for everything that is vile and mean. Is that the kind of individual to whom the Prophet refers? Oh no! Instead of being vile and wicked, the Prophet, on the contrary, describes this individual as a *chosen* one,—"He shall choose thee." This one, we believe, was none other than the Lord himself, the Messiah, the Christ. Certain it is that, since Adam's day, Christ is the only perfect and sinless being who has lived upon the earth, and therefore the only one whom God could choose as a channel of life and blessing to the world. Chosen of God, despised by the people, abhorred by the nation,—clearly, these expressions are true of no one but the Messiah.

THE ACCEPTABLE TIME.

Coming back to our text we inquire, When was Jehovah's acceptable time? Was the Messiah not always acceptable to Jehovah? Did our Lord himself not so indicate when he said, "I do always those things that please my father" (John 8: 29), and did not his Heavenly Father confirm this when he declared, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3: 17)? Yes, that is true

but the Prophet is not here referring to our Lord's acceptance in a *general sense*, the sense in which all the holy angels are acceptable, and in which all mankind who ultimately come into harmony with God will also be acceptable. He speaks of a time when the Messiah would be acceptable in a *special* sense, in a sense in which he had never before, and never would again, be acceptable. He speaks of a time when the Messiah would be acceptable to Jehovah as a sacrifice to cancel the just sentence of condemnation against the race, acceptable as the sin-offering to take away the sin of the world. The same prophet declares of him in another place: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. . . . and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53: 5, 6).

Jehovah's acceptable time for our Lord's sacrifice, was his three and a half years of earthly ministry, during the "days of his flesh." At the beginning of that period our Lord, as expressed in the words of the Psalmist (40: 7), offered himself as a sacrifice, saying: "Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God"; and he there symbolized his death, burial and resurrection by immersion in the river Jordan. It was *then* that Jehovah accepted him, manifesting his approval and acceptance by the impartation of the Holy Spirit, the earnest or pledge of the new nature (Matt. 3: 16). Thereafter, till his crucifixion, our Lord was dying daily, dying as a human being, giving his *flesh* for the life of the world. It is written of him: "He hath poured out his soul unto death": "thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (Isa. 53: 12, 10).

The Day of Salvation.

Our text, however, leads us to understand that not only was this period of three and a half years our Lord's "acceptable time" in which he could offer himself as the ransom-price for the world, but that it was his "day of salvation" as well. "What!" says one, "you don't mean to say that our Lord required salvation! Was he not always holy and separate from sinners, and therefore without sins to be saved from?" Yes, that is true, but remember, that our Lord took the sinner's place. He was made a sin offering for us, he who knew no sin (Cor. 5: 21). As such, he must therefore bear the penalty due to sin, which the Scriptures emphatically declare to be *death* (Rom. 6: 23). Our Lord required salvation from death. In harmony with this we read: "Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to *save him out of death*, was heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5: 7). Notice, he was not saved from dying, but he was saved out of death. Notice, further, that he was not raised as a human being, for his human life was the sin-offering; but he was raised as a New Creature, as the Apostle Peter says, he was "put to death flesh, and made alive spirit" (1 Pet. 3: 18, Diaglott).

Not only was our Lord saved out of death to die no more, because of his perfect obedience to his Father's will, but he was saved to the very highest plane of life, the Divine plane,—he became a possessor of immortality. The Apostle declares: "God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come." He is "Lord of all" (Eph. 1: 20, 21; Phil. 2: 9).

But our text (Isa. 49: 8) reveals something further regarding Jehovah's purpose in our Lord's salvation. It reads:

I WILL PRESERVE THEE AND GIVE THEE FOR A COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE.

God evidently had some object in view in so highly exalting our Lord. All the pain and ignominy which he suffered during these three and a half years were full of purpose. They were fitting him for a great work for which, according to the Divine Plan, he was specially kept, preserved, or reserved. And what was that work? Our text tells us,—"I will give thee for a covenant of the people." But what covenant? Undoubtedly the New Covenant, that great covenant which, as the Apostle declares, Jesus has the right to mediate by virtue of the sacrifice of himself (1 Tim. 2: 5, 6; Heb. 9: 15). For whom, then, is this covenant? Our text informs us that it will be for the people for whom Christ died. Primarily it will be for the nation of Israel, blessing all the obedient of the natural seed, "Israelites indeed"; but eventually its provisions will extend to and embrace the obedient of all nations—all who become true Israelites at heart.

What will this New Covenant accomplish for the people? Our text gives us to understand that, through its operation, Christ will "establish the earth,"—the "new earth" or new social condition foretold in Isaiah 65: 17. This old earth or present social condition is to be destroyed. The Psalmist tells us that "all its foundations are out of course" (Psa. 82: 5; and therefore "as a vesture it shall be folded up and be changed" (Heb. 1: 11). The result of these "new earth" conditions will be that the people will inherit their long lost and "desolate heritages,"—all the blessings and privileges which

the human family lost in Adam by the Fall (Gen. 1: 26).

Is God Slack Concerning His Promise?

It is now nearly nineteen centuries since our Lord's "acceptable time" and "day of salvation," when the Father raised him out of death and set him at his own right hand, enduing him with all power in heaven and in earth. Where, then, is the evidence of this power to bless? Where are the New Covenant and new earth conditions? Where is the promised righteousness, which was to be so evident in these new earth conditions that it would "flow down the streets like a river"? To all these questions there is but the one answer, *Non sunt*, they do not exist. Instead of righteousness, we have social conditions which are unsatisfactory to everyone, rich and poor alike. Instead of a New Covenant, the whole creation is groaning under the weight and burden of sin and death. Instead of Christ reigning to bless, the "god of this world," Satan, deceives the nations and turns every man's hand against his neighbour. Darkness still covers the earth. No, the time foretold by the Prophet has not yet come, when Messiah, as the Sun of Righteousness, will arise and shine upon this dark world, dispelling the gloom and bringing light and blessing and peace to all (Isa. 60: 1, 2). But why the delay? Has God accepted the sin-offering, but yet is unwilling to allow those on whose behalf the offering was made to escape sin's penalty—death? Is God slack concerning his promise? Ah no, dear friends, God is surely not slack concerning any promise which he has made. We must let him be true although we may all require to alter our views on this matter.

The Mystery of Christ.

There is evidently a secret here, hidden from the world in general. The Apostle says that the explanation of the long delay is hidden in a mystery, the "mystery" of Christ. He declares that this mystery is revealed only to the saints, so that "their hearts may be comforted, being closely united in love and in all the wealth of the full assurance of the understanding, in order to *an exact knowledge of the secret of God*, in which are stored all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2: 2, 3, Diaglott). Notice! It is in the exact knowledge of the mystery of God, that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored. What a mine of wealth we have here of wisdom and revelation!

The key to this mystery is found in 1 Cor. 12: 12, —"For as the body is one and hath many members. . . . . and all the members are one body, *so also is Christ.*" Christ, or the Messiah, includes not only Jesus the Head, but also the members of his body (Eph. 1: 22; 5: 32; 1 Cor. 12: 27). This means that Christ is still in the flesh in the person of his body-members, that Christ is not yet fully accepted (Gal. 2: 20; 2 Cor. 4: 11). The day of salvation is not yet completed, because there are still members of Christ to be saved. "But," some one may say, "do you mean to tell us that you, and I, and all who are Christ's during the present time are being accepted as *members* of Christ?" Yes. The Apostle explains to us that that is exactly what our text, Isaiah 49: 8, means. Quoting the very words of our text, and applying them to all who are New Creatures in Christ, he exclaims: "Behold *now* is the acceptable time, behold *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2). According to this, the Apostle extends the "acceptable time" of our text to cover the entire Gospel Age. The great sacrifice of Christ, which began to be accepted in Jesus our Head, will only therefore be complete and finally accepted when the last member of the Church, which is his body, will have passed beyond the vail. Surely this explanation of the Apostle throws further light upon our text! No wonder he says that, in the light of the "mystery," we have access to *all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!

The Acceptable Time for Christ, Head and Body.

Let us now examine our text in this fuller light, revealed in the exact knowledge of the mystery. Can it be possible that the one accepted by Jehovah as the world's great sin-offering is the *whole* Christ, Jesus the Head and the Church his body? Yes, that is what we believe the Scriptures to teach. But did we not already conclude that the words of our text were applicable only to one, the Lord Jesus? Oh yes; but then He and the Church are one, as the Apostles states: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5: 31; 32). Throughout the present Age, God has heard and accepted as members of the Christ all who have been filled with the spirit of consecration, all whose hearts' sentiment has been similar to that expressed by their Head when he cried "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." From our Lord's day to the present time, therefore, the word of invitation and acceptance has gone forth to all who have had the "hearing ears,"—"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, *acceptable* unto God" (Rom. 12: 1).

THE DAY OF SALVATION OF THE CHURCH.

As the three and a half years of our Lord's ministry was *his* "day of salvation," so the entire Gospel Age is the day of salvation for the members of his body. But what are the members of Christ saved from? Perhaps someone suggests "from their sins." But not so. Our text does not speak of sinners, but of God's *holy* one, of whom we are a part if we are Christ's. Before we can be accepted as member's of Christ, we must be cleansed from sin through faith in his blood; and having thus become *holy*, we can then offer ourselves to Jehovah to be sacrificed with our Head. Like our Head, we require to be *saved out of death;* for so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into *his* death (Rom. 6: 3). Death, the Apostle teaches us, is the wages or penalty of sin; consequently, if death cuts off any of God's intelligent creatures, it must be due to sin. The Scriptures assure us that all the members of Christ, being "made conformable unto his death," are to die like their Head. If so, it must be on account of sin; but not because of sin which they themselves have committed; they share with their Head as part of the sin-offering, in order to take away the sin of the world (Rom. 6: 11; Heb. 13: 13).

Similarly, just as our Head was saved out of death and endued with immortality, so also will it be with us, the members of his body. We shall take part in *his* resurrection, the *first* resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 42-44; Phil. 3: 10; Rev. 20: 6).

"And I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people."

In the light of the foregoing, these words apply not only to the Head of the Church, but to the Church itself as well. The body-members will be associated with their Head as part of the one great Mediator of the New Covenant; and to that end they are now invited to lay down their lives with him, to share in his cup, the cup of suffering and death which seals the covenant.

THE TIME OF THE NEW COVENANT.

When will Jehovah give Christ for a covenant of the people? Our text leads us to understand that it will be when the "acceptable time," the "day of salvation," is ended, which the Apostle explains will be at the close of the Gospel Age (2 Cor. 6: 2). Notice particularly how our text reads: "In an acceptable time *have* I heard thee, and in a day of salvation *have* I helped thee, and I *will* preserve (reserve) thee, and give thee for a covenant." The Prophet takes his standpoint down at the close of the Gospel Age, and seeing the acceptance and salvation of the Christ Head and Body as an accomplished fact, he, as the mouthpiece of Jehovah, says: "I *have* heard thee, I *have* helped thee." "But," says one, "the New Covenant began with the death of our Lord at Calvary." Not so. The Prophet, speaking from his prophetic standpoint at the end of this Gospel Age, declares that the New Covenant is still future. He says: "I *will* preserve thee, I *will* give thee for a covenant." Our text is therefore fully in harmony with the rest of Scripture, which shows that the New Covenant belongs entirely to the future age, and will be for the purpose not only of blessing and raising up the fallen human race, but of restoring to them all their rights and privileges lost in Adam.

HOW MAY WE BECOME SHARERS WITH CHRIST?

The Scriptures declare that our share in the future glory as dispensers of the blessings of the New Covenant to the world of mankind, will depend entirely upon our acceptance with Christ now. How, then, can we be acceptable to Jehovah? To be acceptable in that special sense of which we have already spoken, as co-sacrificers with our Lord and Head, justifying faith must first be exercised, that faith which enabled all the overcomers of the past to become acceptable to God in the general sense. All who in the present time exercise faith in Christ's redemptive work, are granted the favour or grace of *justification* (Rom. 5: 1, 2; 4: 24). Now, the Apostle urges us to take heed that we receive not this grace of God (justification) in vain (2 Cor. 6: 1). Justification at the present time is granted merely as a means to an end; and if we do not see or appreciate our call to *sacrifice* with Christ, then the benefit of justification has certainly been received by us in vain.

Behold! Behold the Bridegroom!
All may enter in
Whose lamps are trimmed and burning,
Whose robes are white and clean.

Our Heavenly Father will help us by giving to us his Holy Spirit, as he gave it to our Head, as an earnest or foretaste of our future inheritance. If we will then walk in the spirit according to its leading and direction, he will give us in the resurrection our full inheritance, a glorious spirit body like unto our Lord's (1 John 3: 1, 2).

I trust, dear friends, that we all at least know something of the grace of God in the general sense; and I would urge upon all who have not yet done so, to enter in and participate in the "exceeding riches of his grace" (Eph. 2: 7). I would urge you to do so *immediately*, because the time is short, and the days are evil. May the Lord add his blessing AMEN.

The Preservation of Identity in the Resurrection.

The Importance of the Formation of a Right Character.

(By Brother JOHN EDGAR.)

WHEN we read these words with unprejudiced minds, we see that the Bible agrees with Science in asserting that the body, which becomes disintegrated at death, will not be resurrected. The Scriptures nowhere teach the resurrection of the body; this passage distinctly denies it:—"Thou fool . . . *thou sowest not that body which shalt be.*"

The question is often asked: If the body will not be resurrected, how will the identity be preserved in the resurrection? Must not some part of the old individual be preserved during the interval? What is this seed or bare grain, which, the Apostle says, is sown at death, and will be given a body as it pleases God? Is it not an immaterial something, whatever we may call it, whether soul or spirit, which God preserves and to which he gives a new body in the resurrection? We reply that the soul is the whole sentient being, that when the soul or being dies, it goes out of existence, and God preserves the memory and character of the individual, not as an immaterial something, but merely as a remembrance. In the resurrection he will impart this memory and character to a new body, and thus the identity will be preserved. Many profess that they cannot understand how a man's mental and moral characteristics can be preserved unless during the interval between death and the resurrection they have been embodied in some material or spiritual substance. It is the old difficulty which led to the conception of the natural immortality of the soul and the theory of the disembodied spirits of the dead.

The subject is difficult for our finite minds to grasp. We cannot understand it completely. By and by, when that which is perfect is come, and when we know even as we are known, doubtless we shall be able to comprehend it clearly. We can, however, understand it to some extent.

The illustration which I have found most satisfactory to myself and also to others to whom I have suggested it, is that of the phonograph. It is hinted at in the fifth volume of "Studies in the Scriptures," page 420 (last two paragraphs of chapter 13):—"But does doubt cry out, How could God in resurrection reproduce the millions of earth completely so that each will know himself and profit by the memory of present life experience? We answer that in the phonograph cylinder even man is able to preserve his own words and reproduce them; much more is our Creator able to reproduce for the entire race such brain organism as will perfectly reproduce every sentiment, thought and experience. David seems to refer to the power of God in a manner that might be applicable either prophetically to the resurrection or reflectively to the first birth. He says:—

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. My substance (organism) was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance being yet imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written which in continuance (gradually) were fashioned when as yet there was none of them. Psa. 139: 14-16.

The cylinder or blank record represents our whole physical organism, particularly the brain,

The motive power of the phonograph is the spring mechanism, which, therefore, represents our spirit or power of life. It is only when there is life in the machine that the record is made, just as it is only during life that we can write our character on our organism.

The voice spoken into the instrument represents our thoughts, words and actions, and the vibrations of the needle represent the various chemical and other changes, which are necessary for the production of the impressions on our organism.

After the record is finished, it is found to consist of a more or less continuous series of minute wave-like impressions on the surface of the cylinder. These correspond to impressions on our organism, particularly on our brain, caused by our thoughts, words and deeds. While the record proper is the series of wave-like impressions, yet the whole cylinder is also called a record. So is it with us. Our whole being is the soul, yet the soul proper, the essential part of us, is our character.

When we replace the record in the phonograph and make the necessary changes, and give life to the instrument by winding up the spring mechanism, and setting it in motion, the speech or song is reproduced with exactness, the same words, the same tone, the same inflections, etc., everything identical with what had been spoken or sung into it.

Suppose the record is now destroyed, no man has power to produce one similar in all respects; but though man has not this power, the Almighty has it. It is possible for God to note and remember the marks on the original cylinder so accurately, that years or even centuries after it has been destroyed he could inscribe them on a new cylinder. He could reproduce the length, breadth, depth, and shape of the lines, and their relationship one to another so exactly, that when set going in the phonograph, all who heard it would say, "Why, that is the original record!"

That is what God is going to do with every individual both of the Church and of the world. Each person is writing his own character on his organism, particularly on his brain. Every time he thinks, and especially every time he speaks or acts, he is making an impression on his organism. A thought makes a faint impression, a word makes a deeper impression, and an action makes a still deeper impression, because "actions speak louder than words." These all go to the making of character. When a thought is often repeated, it is more likely to show itself by word or action, and the more often thoughts, words or actions are repeated, the deeper become the resultant lines of character on our organism, particularly on our brain. By and by these impressions become so deep that we call them *habits*.

A man's character may be defined as the sum total of his habits. When habits are formed the impressions are made not only on the brain, but frequently also on the whole organism. They are shown more or less on his face, in his gait, in the tone of his voice, and in the shake of his hand. When we are introduced to anyone, we form more or less consciously a rough estimate of his character. If he has a frank honest expression in his eyes and in his whole face and manner, if he has a cheerful ring in his voice, if he gives us a warm shake of the hand, we feel sure that we have met someone whom we can trust. On the other hand, if his eyes are mean and shifty, his smile cynical, his gait sneaking and his handshake unresponsive, we have the feeling that we should have as little as possible to do with that man. It is not necessary to enter further into details. Sufficient has been said to remind us that a man's character is frequently revealed, to some extent at least, by his general appearance.

But these outward marks, while they are mainly the evidences of corresponding changes in the brain, are, to some extent at least, results of heredity and environment, and are not always a safe index of what is going on within. Hence we cannot always judge a man's character by his appearance; but God looks not so much at the outward appearance as at the mind and heart, the mental and moral characteristics, evidenced by changes in the brain. He takes note of these changes, and as the Prophet Malachi poetically puts it, he writes them all down on his "book of remembrance;" that is to say, he stores them up in his memory. Then when the time comes for the awakening of the dead, no matter how long the interval may have been, even though it may have extended to many centuries, he will reproduce or stamp these characteristics on a new body, just as he might have reproduced the wave-like impressions of a broken record on a new cylinder. Possibly God could have done this at the first without our requiring to form our own character, but he prefers to deal with us as free and intelligent moral agents.

Thus the identity of every individual in the world will be preserved in the resurrection. Each will remember his past life, just as he now remembers it, and his habits, good and bad, will be the same. Every sentiment, thought, and experience will be perfectly reproduced. Thus he will recognize himself. His friends also will recognize him, not so much by his outward appearance as by his habits. You remember how our Lord's followers failed to

recognize him after his resurrection till he revealed himself by one or other of his habits. Mary mistook him for a gardener till he said tenderly in the manner so familiar to her, "Mary." Then, at once recognizing him, she turned herself and said, "Master." The two disciples who walked with him to Emmaus that same day, though their hearts burned within them while he talked with them by the way, failed to recognize him by his appearance and voice, but when, later, "he took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them," they immediately recognized him, and then he "vanished out of their sight."

It has been objected that it is degrading God to state that he will store up in his memory any evil deeds. Surely there is some misconception here! Does the objector think that God would become contaminated in any way? The remembrance of the evil does not contaminate God. We know that it does not, because God is holy and cannot be tempted of evil, and because God is Judge, and it would be impossible for him to judge unless he knew good and evil, and could remember the character of both the righteous and the unrighteous. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12: 14).

Derivation of the Word "Character."

The word "character," viewed derivatively, is very appropriate. It is a Greek word meaning, according to Liddell and Scott, 1. An instrument for marking or graving; also of a person, the engraver. 2. Commonly, a mark engraved or impressed on coins, seals, etc.; also, *the mark or token impressed (as it were) on a person or thing, by which it is known from others;* a distinctive mark, character.

Marks on the Brain.

The brain is composed of two great hemispheres of *white matter* connected with each other at the base and covered over with a thin layer of *grey matter.* As the surface of the brain is thrown into lobes and convolutions by deep and shallow *sulci* (fissures), the resulting area of grey matter on the surface of the brain is very extensive. When extremely thin sections of this grey matter are examined under a powerful microscope, innumerable minute bodies, called neurons or nerve-cells, are found crowded together. They are connected by delicate nerve-filaments with one another and with all the various regions of the body, and it is these nerve filaments which compose the white matter of the brain. The neurons are supposed by physiologists to govern our thoughts, words and actions, and to be the store-house of our memory. Possibly, therefore, the neurons, or, rather, the changes that take place in them, correspond to the wave-like impressions on the surface of the phonograph cylinder.

If that be so, what the Lord will do in the resurrection will be to reproduce a similar set of neurons in the brain of the new body, and the result will be that the old habits of thought, word and action will be restored.

"To Every Seed His Own Body" (v. 38).

Our God is infinitely loving and wise. "His tender mercies are over all his works." He will grant to every one the right and proper desire of his heart. I hope you are of the wheat class, that your affections are set on things above and not on the things of the earth; for if so, you will receive a heavenly or spiritual body in the resurrection, like that of the last Adam, your great forerunner and heavenly Lord. But there are grains "of some other" kind. These also will get their proper desire. There are many who talk about heaven, say they hope to go to heaven, but their heart is not there. Their affections are not spiritual, but earthly. Such persons will be more than satisfied with Paradise restored. It will far exceed the fondest desires of their heart or their wildest dreams of fancy. A dear sister in the Truth, while shopping one day, overheard part of a conversation between a clergyman and a lady who were standing beside her at the same counter. It appeared that the lady had been very ill, and the clergyman was sympathizing with her. In the course of the conversation the lady said:—"Yes, indeed, I was dangerously ill; it is only by the mercy of God that I'm not in heaven to-day." Evidently she did not desire to go to heaven. Her affections were centred on earthly things.

Those who have earthly, fleshly desires will, if obedient to the great Mediator, be resurrected to the likeness of the first Adam, perfect human beings with full dominion over a perfect earth. When they are awakened from the grave or death-state, their bodies will be stamped with exactly the same character as they possessed at the time of their death; for the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the good and the evil, and he is taking note of the character of everyone, both of the Church and of the world. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6: 7). Thus the identity of each will be preserved in the resursurection, and everyone will be held responsible for the deeds done in the body. "And so it has been written, The First Adam became a living soul; the

Last Adam a life-giving Spirit. The Spiritual, however, was not the first, but the animal [or natural]; afterwards, the Spiritual. The first man was from the ground, earthy [of earthly origin]; the second man is from heaven [of heavenly or spiritual origin]. Of what kind the earthy one, such also the earthy ones; and of what kind the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones; and even as WE bore the likeness of the earthy one, WE *shall* also bear the likeness of the heavenly one. And I say this, brethren, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; nor shall corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. 15: 45-50, Diaglott). We who are no longer in the flesh but in the spirit, because the spirit of God dwells in us, will receive spiritual or heavenly bodies in the resurrection. "But the natural man receiveth not the spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2: 14). His mind is not spiritual but earthly; therefore in the resurrection he will receive an earthy body like that of the first Adam. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit" (John 3: 6).

In the case of the Church, it is the heart's intentions, and the efforts put forth as the outcome of these intentions, which represent the character of the *new creature*. The imperfections of thought, word and deed, which are not wilful, but are the result of our organism rendered imperfect through the Fall, are covered by the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. In the resurrection, therefore, the changes in the neurons due to the imperfections of the flesh, will not be reproduced, but those which are the results of the heart's intentions will be stamped on the perfect spiritual body which the Lord will create. In this way the identity of the New Creature will be preserved, but not the identity of the old human nature. It is as if a trained vocalist were to sing into a phonograph which has been fitted with a faulty cylinder. The resulting record would be discordant. But God could destroy the faulty cylinder, make a new one of different material and finer quality, and reproduce upon it the wave-like impressions caused by the singer's voice, and ignore the others due to the imperfections of the cylinder. The result would be a perfect record which would give forth the beautiful melody exactly as it had been sung into the phonograph.

In the case of the world, however, the various changes in the neurons will be reproduced in the human or natural body, which will be created exactly as they were in the old organism. The result will be an exact reproduction of the character of the individual as it was at the time of his death. Little children who have died before they have had time to form character, will have no bad habits to unlearn in the resurrection. This will be to some extent to their advantage, but on the other hand this advantage will be counterbalanced by their lack of the lessons gained by a previous experience of evil. They will require to gain their experience during the Millennium.

The Importance of Character.

We see, then, the great importance of forming the right kind of character now. That is the only thing we now have which will be restored to us in the resurrection. When we get this thought, we can realize the worthlessness and transitoriness of all else. Our attention will not be so much on what we shall eat and drink, what clothes we shall wear, how much money we can make, what remedies we should use for our various bodily ailments, etc. While these things are necessary in order that we may preserve our health and strength and do more efficient service for the Lord, the truth and the brethren, the essential thing is the formation of the Christ-like character. Our time, energies, etc., therefore, should be first and foremost in this direction, for it was for this purpose that God predestinated the bride of Christ, that the various members should be in the image of Christ.

That is why Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." That is why the Apostle wrote: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." All the things which the world considers so wonderful and desirable are loss and dross to us that we may win Christ, be made partakers of his sufferings and conformable to his death, and so share in his resurrection. Are our domestic or business affairs filling our mind? Are we worrying over our balance-sheet? If so, let us realize that these and all other earthly things are but secondary. Let us do our duty with regard to these, but let them not fill our mind and heart. Rather let us say with the Apostle, "This one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Difference Between a Phonograph and a Man.

Thus the phonograph serves as a good illustration of the method by which God will preserve the identity of each individual in the resurrection. Yet there is a considerable and important difference between a phonograph and a man. The one is merely a mechanical device; the other is a living soul, a sentient being.

(1) The phonograph is altogether the creature of

its environment. It has no conscience or moral sense, that is to say, no faculty of discerning right and wrong; and it has no volition. If a person sings into it, it cannot say to itself: "I do not like that song. I do not approve of that sentiment." It cannot rise up and go out in search of more congenial society. In a word, it cannot voluntarily change its environment, and it *must* record everything that is spoken or sung into it, so long as its cylinder is moving.

Though, like the phonograph, a man is influenced by his environment, he can change it, more or less, as he desires. As a rule, he can choose better or worse companions, better or worse books, better or worse modes of life, etc. There is a great deal of truth in the old saying: "Birds of a feather flock together." If you are godly-minded, the worldly-minded will not desire your company, nor you theirs. If you persist in associating with worldly people when you can dissociate yourself from them, you will be more or less contaminated; some of their worldly sentiments will be received by you; for, as the Apostle says: "Evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15: 33). Suppose you are a member of one of the denominations of Christendom, and you have come to realize that you are associating with worldly people, you should dissociate yourself from them. The Lord exhorts us: "Come out from among them. Be ye clean that bear the vessels (teachings) of the Lord" (2 Cor. 6: 17; Isa. 52: 11). The Apostle also urges us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Is this a contradiction? No. The Apostle is addressing those who are endeavouring to be like Christ, and exhorting them to meet often one with another, in order to provoke one another to love and to good works, and *that* the more they see the day approach, the day of the Lord,—the day of vengeance upon Christendom, and the day of the Church's deliverance. If we follow the Apostle's advice, we shall find that the resulting influence upon our minds and hearts will be good.

We cannot, however, altogether avoid contact with the evil that is in the world, and it is not meant by God that we should. Our forefathers, many of them godly men, perceiving the teaching of the Scriptures that the Church is not of the world but separate from it, shut themselves up in monasteries, but it was in vain. They could not avoid the evil that was in the world, and it was not God's purpose that his children should withdraw from the world in this fashion. The evil which we cannot avoid we must resist, in the sense that we must not be influenced by it to do or think evil. On the contrary, we must overcome evil with good for it is to the overcomers that Jesus has promised a share with him on his throne, even as he also overcame evil with good and sat down with his Father on his throne. This means that the evil influences from without should be used as opportunities for enabling us by the grace of God to form good habits of thought, word and deed, habits of faith, patience, meekness and love. Suppose you had nothing to test your patience, how could you develop this strong quality. We learn obedience through the things which we suffer, just as did our great Forerunner.

Thus, while the phonograph, so long as its cylinder is moving, must record all the sounds which come to it from without, we, on the contrary, record on our organisms our own thoughts, words and deeds, and not those of others unless we choose to make them our own. God is leaving each of us to the freedom of our will, while at the same time he is seeing to it that all things are working together for good to those who love him, who are the called according to his purpose.

Thus one great difference between a phonograph and a human being is that the latter is possessed of a conscience, the ability to discern what is right and what is wrong, and he has freedom of will to choose between the two, to accept or reject as he desires.

(2) The other great difference between a phonograph and a human being, is that the machine cannot voluntarily obliterate or deepen the marks on its records once they are made. Men, on the contrary, can do this to a greater or less extent. In order to understand this, let us consider what is a living soul.

A Living Soul.

The word of God says: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2: 7). When man was formed of the dust of the ground, the elements of the earth, he had all the potentialities of hearing, speech, thought and action, but, without the power of life, none of these could be put into force. Then God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, the spirit or power of life. Then, and not till then, man became a living soul. Thus we see that the soul is not the body, nor is it the spirit of life, but it is the whole sentient being, the being which is endowed with sense-perception.

The dominant part of the soul is the will, the thinking part of a man. This is the *ego*, the real person, for in a sense the body is merely the instrument of the will. Yet there can be no will without a body. A man whose brain has been injured

cannot tell after his recovery what occurred during the interval of his unconsciousness. This is surely a positive proof that his mind is not independent of his organism.

I have already mentioned that the grey matter of the brain is the organ of volition and intelligence. It may be mapped out into three areas:—

1, an area in the frontal region concerned in cognition and volition.

2, a motor or ideo-motor area in the middle above the ears, and

3, a sensory area behind.

This distinction, however, is not absolute.

The neurons or nerve-cells in these areas are arranged in groups. For instance, the nerve-cells which control the *right* side of the body are situated on the *left* side of the brain; the leg area being in the grey matter at the summit of the brain; the arm area lower down on the same (left) side of the brain; and the neck and face area, including also speech, still lower down. What applies to mankind, applies also, though to a lesser degree, to all mammals. They also have a brain composed of grey and white matter, with neurons and nerve-filaments. They also respond to stimuli, are conscious, and can reason to some extent. The arguments usually put forward in support of the unscriptural doctrine commonly held regarding the nature of the soul and its supposed inherent immortality, would apply also to the lower animals.

Professor Ferrier demonstrated the various areas by exposing the brain of a monkey and experimenting with the poles of a battery. (The brain is insensitive to pain). After some practice he was able, by touching the various points of the motor area in turn, to cause the monkey to perform various actions, such as extending its arm, seizing an apple, conveying it to its mouth, and biting it. From these experiments valuable knowledge has been gained, enabling surgeons to localize the area of the brain affected in many cases of tumour, etc., in human beings.

The filaments which connect the nerve-cells with each other and with the various portions of the body, form, when gathered into fine or thick cords, the various nerves. These are classified as sensory nerves, motor nerves, etc. The sensory nerves convey impressions from the eye, ear, mouth, skin, and other parts to the respective cells in the sensory area, and thence the impressions are conveyed by connecting filaments first to the higher intellectual centres, and thence, as a rule, to the nerve-cells in the motor area. These in turn originate impulses which are transmitted along the motor nerves to the corresponding muscles of the jaw, larynx, arm, leg, or other parts.

For instance, someone in front of you raised a stick. The impression strikes your eyes and immediately an impulse is transmitted to the visual centres at the back of your brain, and you see what is happening. The message is then conveyed to your intellectual centres, and you appreciate the fact that the man is attempting to strike you. Immediately the intellectual centres are thrown into a great commotion. They flash a message along to both your arm centres, and these in turn transmit impulses to the muscles of your arms, with the result that your left arm is raised to protect yourself, and your right attempts to seize your opponent's arm or the stick. At the same time, a message is flashed along to your speech centre and it in turn transmits impulses to the muscles of your throat and mouth, with the result that you call out "Stop." A complicated process, aud yet it is all done in a second! Truly we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

How Habits are Formed.

At first the interval between the perception of some particular sensation and the action which results, is of an appreciable duration, but the more frequently the same thoughts, words and actions follow upon the perception of a certain sensation or set of sensations, the shorter becomes the interval, until finally it is quite inappreciable. No conscious effort of the will is now required. The action has become more or less automatic. A habit has been acquired.

How can we explain this? It may be that, just as the electric current flows much more readily through a thick wire than through a thin one, so the filaments which connect certain sensory cells with certain intellectual and motor cells may, from frequent use, become thicker and more active, and the cells themselves also may become more efficient, with the result that a conscious effort is no longer required.

Physical Habits.

Let me illustrate this by showing how a physical habit is formed. When a person begins to learn how to ride a bicycle, he is told that whenever the machine becomes inclined to one side, he should at once turn the front wheel to the same side in order to save himself from falling. Yet no sooner is he mounted on the bicycle and left to his own resources than he finds himself sprawling on the ground. Why is this? His sensory cells warned him correctly when the bicycle became inclined to

the side, but at this stage of his training, he requires to make a distinct conscious effort in order to pass the message on to the motor cells which govern the arm muscles. Before he has even thought of turning the front wheel to the side, he is on the ground.

After he has had a few falls, however, the painful experience teaches him to think more quickly and more definitely, and the next time he mounts the bicycle, when he feels it becoming inclined to one side, he at once turns the front wheel to the same side. But he has not yet learnt how far to turn it, and as a result he overdoes it, and down he comes again. Should he persevere, he will find that with further practice, extending over several days perhaps, he will be able to ride the bicycle, though he will take the breadth of the road while doing so. But before he has gone far, his nerve-cells will become fatigued, and again he will fall. With some more patience and perseverance he will find by and by to his joy that he can ride for miles with only an occasional wobble.

When he becomes an expert rider, how different is the action! How gracefully he glides along! With what perfect equilibrium! How accurately he chooses his path among the stones and between the ruts! And yet he scarcely requires to think of what he is doing! He engages in an animated conversation with his neighbour, or he admires the surrounding scenery, without so much as a wobble. Why is this? It is because those sensory and motor centres which have to do with the keeping of his equilibrium on a bicycle are so efficient and so well connected with each other by active intercommunicating filaments that the effort of the will is no longer or scarcely at all necessary. The action has become automatic. A habit has been acquired. That is how habits are formed.

The illustration which I have given demonstrates the method of acquirement of physical habits; but the process necessary to the formation of mental and moral habits, which are so much more important because they constitute the character and therefore the most important part of the identity of the individual, are essentially similar in kind. Surely, then, if a man, in his efforts to master the art of cycling, is willing to face the smiles and gibes of friends and strangers, and to submit to the pain and ignominy occasioned by frequent falls, if he can persevere in spite of these and all other forms of discouragement, until he has crowned his efforts with success, how much greater reason have WE for laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, so that we may run with patience (patient endurance) the race that is set before us. In this endeavour we shall be greatly helped by reflecting on the faith of the ancient worthies and by looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and, as a result, is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12: 1, 2).

Mental and Moral Habits.

The more often certain thoughts, words and actions follow upon certain sensations or sets of sensations, the more easily are they evoked. At first a conscious effort is necessary, but with long practice they become more or less automatic. A mental or moral habit, good or bad, has been acquired. For instance, having consulted the word of counsel which our Heavenly Father has granted us, and having found there the proverb that a soft answer turneth away wrath, and the injunction that we should bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us, suppose we resolve that by the grace of God we shall endeavour to follow the good advice thus given us. It will not be long before our resolution will be put to the test. Possibly on the same day some one will curse us, not as a rule in the sense of uttering an oath against us, but he will attempt, wittingly or unwittingly, to injure our good name. At once we feel annoyed and excited, and before we have had time to think, we give a sharp answer in return. Then what a feeling of shame comes over us. We recognize that we have returned evil for evil, and confessing our sin to our Heavenly Father, we pray for his forgiveness through the merit of our dear Lord's death on our behalf, and we beseech him for continued favour in our further endeavours after righteousness. Realizing that our fall was due to the fact that our brain has been all along more accustomed to obey evil thoughts than good thoughts, and that we were thinking more of self than of God, we make an endeavour to "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" and think only of such things as are true, honourable, just, pure, loving, and of good report (2 Cor. 10: 5; Phil. 4: 8), and to turn to the Lord for grace and strength in every time of need.

Should we persevere in spite of several failures, we shall find by and by that we shall be able to suffer insults patiently, and to return good for evil. At first we shall do it awkwardly, so that sometimes we shall wonder whether it would not have been better simply to have taken no notice of the one who is using us despitefully; but if we continue to practice, we shall find that it will become easier and

easier to be meek, gentle and kind to others, until at length we shall acquire the habit of loving-kindness, and then without much, if any, conscious effort, we shall bless them that curse us and do good to them that hate us.

One thing which will help us greatly in our efforts to love our enemies is the knowledge that God is the great First Cause, and that our enemies, the secondary causes, could not say or do anything against us without his permission. Everything that God does is for a wise and loving purpose. Therefore, when God permits anyone to insult us or injure our good name, it must be for our good. What good, you ask, could such an action do to us? The good it does is that it enables us to mortify the deeds of the flesh, to sacrifice self, and to develop faith, meekness, self-control, patience, peace and love.

The old will will demand justice, but the new mind will keep the body under, and love will eventually triumph. Instead of harming us, those who speak or do evil against us are conferring a benefit upon us. The promise of joint-heirship with Christ is to those who not only believe on Christ, but also suffer for his sake, and who overcome evil with good. How can we be overcomers if our Heavenly Father does not permit us to be tempted? Let us, therefore, dear brethren, "glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Rom. 5: 3-5).

This does not mean that we should put others to the test in order that they may be benefited spiritually. Did not our Lord say: "It must needs be that offences (causes of stumbling) come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh"? Let us, therefore, beware lest we should put a stumbling-block before one of Christ's little ones. It were better that a millstone were hanged about our neck, and that we were drowned in the depth of the sea (Matt. 18: 6, 7).

It is always easier to acquire bad habits than good habits. Bad habits are more pleasing to the flesh; they have their basis in selfishness. Good habits, on the other hand, have their basis in love for God and righteousness, and require self-renunciation. Another reason why it is easier to form bad habits is that our organisms are all imperfect through the Fall. It is impossible to make a perfect record on an imperfect cylinder, and similarly, it is impossible to form a perfect character on an imperfect organism. "There is none righteous, no, not one."

The only human beings who have possessed perfect organisms were Adam and Jesus. Adam disobeyed God. When he perceived that the one whom he loved so much had taken the forbidden fruit, he resolved to die with her and partook of it also. He should have had more faith in and love for God. Thus he evidenced not only want of faith, but also self-will or self-love. His record became faulty. The character-tones which proceeded from it were harsh and discordant, and as all God's works are perfect, God was obliged by his love, no less than by his justice, to destroy Adam, and to condemn the whole race, imperfect through heredity, to the same fate.

Jesus, on the other hand, obeyed God in every respect. He evidenced faith, meekness, kindness, long-suffering, patience and love. The resulting record gave a beautiful harmony, and demonstrated that he was entitled to eternal life. His continual delight was to do his Father's will. In obedience to this will he humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross, wherefore he hath been highly exalted and given a name above every name. "Oh how sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear!" He is "the chiefest among ten thousand," "the altogether lovely one."

How different it is with us. When as little children we began to think, speak and act, we demonstrated the truth of the saying, "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Many of the notes which we produced from the beginning were grating, harsh and discordant, such as the notes of pride, impatience, anger, spite, envy. You have all seen little children, when their toys are taken from them, cry with anger and perhaps endeavour to strike you. These various traits became accentuated as we grew older, with the result that when we reached years of discretion we found that the lines of our character were already deeply impressed on our organism. We had acquired many evil habits. Now we find it extremely difficult, in some cases impossible to eradicate these lines. There is a hint here to parents. Fathers and mothers can do much by judicious training, keeping in check the natural bad qualities possessed by their children, and fostering the good qualities. On the other hand, each child has its own natural disposition and its own will, so that however judicious the training, parents are frequently disappointed with the result.

The way to eradicate the bad lines of character and form good ones is to surrender ourselves entirely to the Lord, and seek his guidance and help by prayer and study of his Word, as well as by meditation and putting into practice the lessons we learn. The Lord will bring us through the School

of experience so that we may, like our Master, learn obedience through the things which we suffer, and thus we shall gradually become emptied of self and filled with the Holy Spirit.

There are two antagonistic spirits underlying every thought, word and action, the one evil, and the other holy. If our thoughts, words and actions are the result of an evil spirit or mind, an evil disposition, the resulting notes are harsh and discordant; but if they spring from a holy spirit or mind, the spirit of truth and love, the resulting notes are sweet and harmonious. These two spirits are like the positive and negative poles of a magnet. They are antagonistic the one to the other. The evil spirit is the spirit of Satan, the spirit of pride, unbelief, selfishness, anger, envy, strife, backbiting, and slander. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and of Christ, the spirit of humility, faith, love, self-control, patience, generosity, peace, kindness and self-sacrifice. The only ones who can receive the Holy Spirit are the followers of Christ. By it they gradually obliterate the lines of pride, and slowly, painfully substitute the lines of humility. For the lines of unbelief they substitute the lines of faith; for the lines of impatience, the lines of patience; for the lines of envy and convetousness, the lines of generosity; for the lines of selfishness and hate, the lines of self-sacrifice and love.

Necessity of Study and Practice.

Much study, practice and patient endurance will be necessary. There are so many bad habits to overcome, and so many good habits to cultivate, that we shall find it a life-long struggle. Just as in the case of the phonograph, if we wish a sweet, harmonious record, our throat must first be pliable and otherwise capable of being trained, and then we must undergo a prolonged course of training in the proper mode of breathing and use of the voice, as well as in the study of music. Similarly, to produce a character-record like Christ's, to be conformed to his image, our heart must first be meek or pliable and otherwise capable of being trained, and then we shall require to study the Word of God daily, and to submit to a prolonged course of training, learning through bitter as well as sweet experiences, the habits of faith, hope, love, humility, and all the other graces of the spirit. But success cannot be assured unless we have daily communion with God by prayer and meditation, and receive his grace and strength; and after we have acquired good habits we must continue to put them into practice every day. It is said of such great musicians as Paderewski that they require daily practice. If they omit one day, they recognize that their touch is not so good; if they omit two days in succession, their friends notice it. How much more is this true of us. If any day we fail to study and practice the graces of the spirit, we feel that we have lost touch with the Lord, and if we continue the neglect, our friends will also notice it, and ultimately we may get so much out of harmony with the Lord that it may be too late to recover ourselves.

We must remember, however, that though our standard is perfection, and we must constantly aim at attaining this standard, we can hope to attain it only as regards the heart's intentions. Though God expects us to make progress, he does not expect perfection in the flesh. It is in Christ the Beloved that we are accepted. If it had been possible for anyone to be perfect in the flesh, Jesus would not have died for us.

When we have formed the right lines of character, so far as is possible, on our organism, God will give us in the resurrection, as has been already explained, a new body of the divine nature with the lines of character of the New Creature impressed upon it, but without any of the imperfections which are due to the Fall. Thus our identity as New Creatures will be preserved. We shall know ourselves, and we shall know one another. May we all be faithful to our vow of consecration, so that we may receive the honour of bearing the image of our heavenly Lord, and sitting with him on his throne to the glory of God the Father! AMEN.

Finally, My Brethren.

(By Brother J. HEMERY.)

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong, let all your things be done in charity." (1 Cor. 16: 13.)

WITH these stirring words the Apostle Paul closes his first Epistle to the Corinthians. That there was necessity for each exhortation is manifest from a reading of the Epistle. The members of the Corinthian church were already in danger of falling from their steadfastness. Their pride of strength was proving a weakness; they were beginning to doubt the very essentials of the doctrine of Christ, even denying the resurrection. The Lord's people at all times have needed exhortation to steadfastness of faith and practice, and they are not to wait until someone is specially raised up for that work, but are to exhort one another daily, and "so much the more as they see the day approaching." We, who live in the end of the age, specially require our minds to be stirred; and we trust that our present meditation on the Apostle's word will be a stimulus to us, to watch, to be strong, and to be steadfast in the faith.

"WATCH YE!" the Apostle exclaims. This may be said to be the watchword of the New Testament. Our Lord specially commanded his disciples to watchfulness, for he well knew the need for care. There are two things about which there is the injunction to watch: one *for* which we are to watch, the other *against* which we are to watch. The consecrated followers of Christ watch for the return of the Lord; as he said: "Be ye like men who watch for their Lord when he shall return from the wedding.' They were to watch, for they knew not the day nor the hour when he should return from heaven. They also watch and pray lest they enter into temptation. They know that their adversary the Devil goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. *Against* him they watch, as for their life; but they watch *for* their Lord, whose return means salvation. Two great spiritual powers are presented: the Lord fighting for his Church, and Satan, its great enemy, against it, bent upon its destruction so far as that may be possible to him. Why is Satan so malignant towards the church? Why is he its deadly enemy? Because of the peculiar and special place it has in the purpose of God; and because Satan knows that, sooner or later, those who are following in the footsteps of Jesus will share with Jesus in the power of the Kingdom. He hates them for the same reasons that he hated the Lord; and for self-interest he seeks their destruction even as he sought his. Besides this, the Church has occupied a peculiar place in the world. The repository of the Truth of God, Satan has tried to so corrupt it, that the Word of God might be rendered powerless; and how well he succeeded in that, we know. Humanly speaking, the corruption of the church has kept the world for a thousand years in dense darkness concerning God and his purposes.

In the old days of the prophets and kings of Israel, the policy of Satan was to entice and entangle the leaders of the people; for he well knows that the majority are ever willing to follow their leaders into either good or evil: "like Master, like servant; like priest, like people," is one of the ruling principles of this present evil world. Satan well knew that if he could bring Moses, David, or Solomon into his enticements, he could do immense damage to the people. And thus it was, when Israel had a king or leader who feared the Lord, the people also feared the Lord and were prosperous; but when a wicked king ruled over them, they followed him into idolatry and incurred the displeasure of the Lord. In the days of our Lord the Pharisees and Scribes were the leaders of the people, to the hurt of the people. Satan had blinded their eyes, and through them had blinded the eyes of the people. It was because they were the representatives of the Jewish dispensation that our Lord bade his disciples obey the Pharisees, for they sat in Moses' seat. "But," he cautioned them,

"beware of their doctrine, their teaching." The time was then at hand when God would require an account of their stewardship; and very soon this stewardship was taken from them, that it might be given to those who would bring forth the fruits thereof. The Pharisees and Scribes were dismissed as unworthy, and the disciples of Christ received that honour, as Paul intimated: "We are made stewards of the mysteries of God" (2 Cor. 4: 1). In turn, the truth was committed to the church, the faithful having become "the light of the world." We, therefore, become the object of Satan's malice and malignity.

To clearly apprehend the reason why Satan so urgently seeks our destruction, is to get strength for our fight, and to gain assurance in our walk of faith. To become aware that we are constantly in the eye and mind of the enemy, means that we perceive that Satan knows of our call to heavenly honours,—and the fact of our being tempted should encourage us, for Satan troubles but little those who do not walk with Jesus. Now that the end of the age has come, and truth is being freed from the defiling errors, and now that the Lord is gathering his people together preparatory to the "Harvest Home," the great enemy is doing his utmost to defile the Lord's people, to destroy their faith, and to make them unfaithful stewards. At this time we need to take most earnest heed to our way, for the enemy "has great wrath, knowing that his time is short." Not only as individuals, but as communities do we need special watchfulness, for the enemy takes much interest in church affairs. He is as desirous for its destruction now, as he was when he tried to drown it in the Galilean lake.

By watching against the enemy, not being ignorant of his devices, and taking heed to our lamp, we shall endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We shall watch against pride and all vainglory. The Corinthians rather boasted of their strength and of their liberality. They suffered a notorious evil-doer to have fellowship, instead of putting him from amongst them. But whilst they were confident of themselves, Satan was getting an advantage, for some of them had gone wrong about the resurrection, actually denying its possibility. We need to watch both our faith and our practice. We need right doctrine as well as right living. Indeed, we cannot have the one without the other; we cannot retain either unless we have both. How careful, then, must we be to have the Truth, that we may be sanctified by it. Our hearts should be specially guided, for *there* Satan makes particular endeavours, either by subtlety or by assault and battery. We have one safeguard, worthy indeed of the name,—"a single eye to the glory of God." Having no schemes or desires of our own we are not so liable to be tempted, and are at liberty to watch against the enemy. Two great spirit powers watch the Christian on his way: one, his Lord, watches over him for good; the other, his enemy, seeks to devour, and to destroy. One notes every desire for holiness and helps the pilgrim to attain; the other notes every little default, and marks with quick result every possible chance of harm. Because of this, the Apostle exhorts us to alertness of mind towards our enemy, and to quickness of discernment and sharp apprehension of that which would hinder the truth of Christ making free way in our heart.

"Stand Fast in the Faith."

The first essential is to know the faith, to be *in* the faith, else how can one stand fast in it? What is the faith in which we must stand fast? How may we know we have it? Paul had no doubt on those points, and neither need we. He said: "if an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that which I have preached, let him be cut off." In this Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul had just declared the gospel "wherein ye stand,"—that Christ died for our sins, and that he was raised again, according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15: 1-5). That was the foundation upon which his good news was based; upon that he built his teaching of a great anointed, the firstfruits unto God, who, sharing in the death of the Lord, were immersed on behalf of the non-anointed—the mass of the dead in Adam. *This* is the doctrine in which he had just urged the Corinthians to remain steadfast, immovable. If we may say that the command, "Watch ye," is the watchword of the New Testament, we may also say that "Stand fast" is the special watchword of the Apostle Paul. "I live, if ye stand fast," he said to the Thessalonian Church (1 Thess. 3: 8), and the thought is present and expressed in all his general epistles.

"Be ye steadfast, immovable." What is the difference here? To be steadfast means that the word preached has appealed to the reason, that conviction has come, and, further, that the will has been put into motion. Here is a set definite purpose: the mind and the will in co-operation to hold fast that which has been proved to be good. This is in every way proper. "I believed, and therefore have I spoken," said the Psalmist; "we believe, and therefore speak," said Paul, and we echo the words. If God has blessed us with light upon our pathway, if the light of this gospel has come upon us, if our ears have heard the heavenly call, let us *assure* our-

selves that there is nothing better anywhere else. Let us determine in our hearts not to turn away from the hope of the gospel. To be steadfast in the faith means that we have realized it as such, and have accepted it; whereas, lack of steadfastness means that something has come between us and the hope we originally had; that we have allowed our sight to be dimmed by a wrong condition of heart; that something of "self" has intruded between us and the chiefest treasure we possessed. To be steadfast means patience in well doing; that the desire for excitement is being subdued, and that we are *content* with the providences designed by our Heavenly Father. To have this quality means growth in grace and in possibilities of service.

I knew a brother who often complained of his little progress, and who watched, almost with envy, the steady development of other brethren. He complained that he "didn't grow." No doubt he spoke the truth; but it was apparent he lacked steadfastness. He thought he was not planted in the right soil, and so transplanted himself. After a short time, he thought he might grow better under different conditions, and again transplanted himself —this happened several times. Brethren, while we need to see that we get the best out of ourselves and out of our circumstances and opportunities, we must surely hold fast to the quality of steadfastness. In the larger view, let us hold fast that which we have found to be good, and let us not have the uncertainty which comes from lack of conviction, or through allowing our minds to be diverted to things of lesser value.

To be unmovable means that you have so rooted your conviction in the will that you will not move yourself nor be moved by others. How happy the man whose faith and purpose are "fixed, unmoveable, secure!" That man is always a source of strength to others. But each of us must attain to this, or we are not overcomers against all that can be brought against us. Our victory will be over the seductions of the world, and over the wiles and snares of the Devil. To be unmovable does not mean to have a dull, sullen temperament, but one quickened to discern good and evil; quick to perceive the value of the Truth, and to say, "Now have I found the ground wherein, sure my Soul's anchor may remain,"—there to remain though the mountains be moved into the sea. Some years ago I visited Port Erin on the west coast of the Isle of Man, just after a storm. There, in the little bay, lay the remains of a "breakwater," built to make a harbour on that wild coast. As if to show how futile were the works of man, the sea one night rose and tossed over the huge blocks of concrete as a plaything, and by morning the breakwater was destroyed. Feeble though the Lord's people are, in Him they are strong, so strong, that *no* power can break them. No powers of evil, however fiercely hurled against them, can move them. Lack of study is one of the chief causes of failure on this line. We require constantly to attend to the concentration of our mind on the means that the Lord has provided for us. He is strong who *reads* much, and who *meditates* on the Word.

"Quit You Like Men."

How do men acquit themselves? Sometimes very ill indeed. But the Apostle has an ideal before him. He is thinking of a strong character—a "manly" man. There are many qualities associated with manliness, but two prominent ones will serve to illustrate—Courage, and Dignity. Courage is needed, because the fight is long and furious. The enemy is mighty and never relaxes his purpose. The Christian's walk is contrary to the course of this present evil world. The necessity for conviction and courage is apparent. But never were the sterling qualities more necessary than at present, for *now* the fight against the Truth grows furious. "Only be thou strong and very courageous," said the angel to Joshua, and we may take the word to ourselves, that we fail not in the day of battle. Dignity is another feature of a manly character. When the enemy comes in like a flood we should not get scared; nor when he attempts to attract our attention by some new thing, should we get excited. But how frequently has it happened that something new has so engrossed our attention, that for a time we have forgotten the more important things. How often when it has been remarked: "Brother So-and-So believes this and that," we have wasted the Lord's precious time in discussing the situation or the brother himself, instead of pursuing the Lord's work. The mature mind finds in the toys of childhood nothing to claim his attention; nor should we allow the things of the immature *mind* to divert us from our intention to become conformed to the Christ-likeness. Moreover, we should keep the dignity of Christian manhood, even though attacks are made upon us. I grant it is not always possible to keep dignified if a terrier is barking at one's heels; but in the *spiritual* world we can do this; yea, even though a roaring lion be against us, we can go on unmoved.

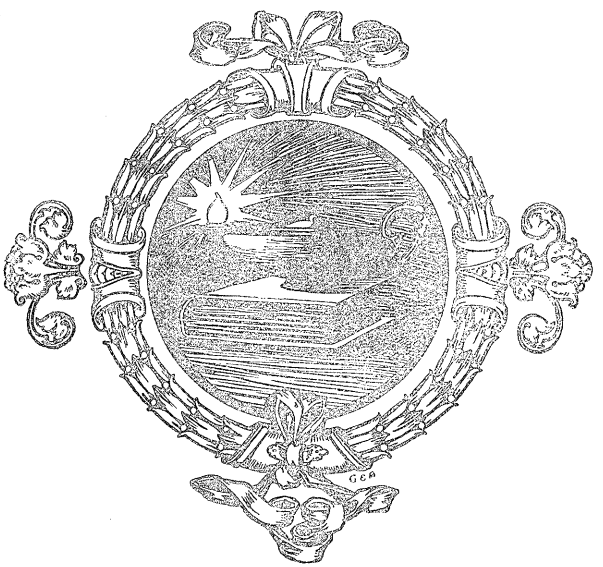
"Be Strong."

"How easy to say it, but how difficult to get strength," says one. Strength of faith, strength of character, resolution of will, and a feeling of assur-

ance, are the things longed for by many of the Lord's people, and their need is felt by all. How may I get strength? The Lord answers "Let him take hold of my strength." The Lord is ever the source of our strength, but its possession depends upon our faith and determination. The only way the believer can get strength is by his faith, by believing that God will be his help in every time of need. He puts faith in the promises, acts upon his faith, and then comes the necessary strength. The Lord has given us, not the spirit of fear, but the spirit of *power*. Let all feelings of fearfulness of whatever description (save the fear towards God) be put aside as of the evil one, and let us stand before God in all confidence of his acceptance. To do this is to realize the Truth upon which so-called Christian Science bases its teaching—the power of the mind over the body, though in *our* case it is the power of the new nature over the old. Let us not fear concerning the Lord's work, nor concerning our own salvation. He who is for us is more than all that can be against us. The work will prosper because it is his; and the Church will be gathered because he has purposed it.

David said: "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?" When his enemies came against him, they stumbled and fell. If *a host* should arise against him, he would have no fear; and if *war* were made against him, then would he be *confident*. His confidence rose as danger increased.

Let us in these times of stress take heed to our ways. Having proved the value of the Truth for ourselves, and having seen its effect upon others, and perceiving that by it our hearts have been filled with joy and gladness and our lives brought into full consecration to the Lord, we cannot do better than heed the injunction—Stand fast in the Faith; Quit you like men; Be strong. Let us watch that no man beguile us; and in our watching and contention for the faith, let us obey the last part of the exhortation—"Let all your things be done in charity,"—in love, and with the gentleness of Christ AMEN.



Overcoming

(By Brother J. GLASS.)

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. 3: 31.)

I AM sure, dear friends, that the more we understand and appreciate our heavenly calling, the more we see that *overcoming* is the one thing above all else that we should seek. This was intimated by Jesus in Matt. 6: 33—"Seek ye chiefly the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness."

Our text tells us that the Kingdom is for the overcomers. To enable us to be overcomers and to attain the Kingdom we have wonderful provisions. When God stooped down to redeem us from all iniquity, he emptied heaven of its choicest treasure,—he gave his well beloved Son! Now, "He who spared not his Son, his only Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" Yes, "*all* things are yours, for ye are Christ's." "*All* things written are for your sakes." "My God shall supply *all* your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Without doubt, dear friends, God is for us. We are assured of success, for he who has begun the good work will complete it unto the day of Christ. The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, declared: "I know him whom I have believed, and am *persuaded* that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto his care against that day" (2 Tim. 1: 12). From the time that Paul was apprehended when journeying to Damascus, until the time he was able to write to Timothy that he had finished his course, having fought a good fight and kept the Faith, he had never stopped to look back. He had never entertained failure, but was always an overcomer. How expressive of the Apostle's mind are these words: "We are not of those that draw back unto perdition, but of those that believe unto the saving of the soul." No doubt Paul's success was assured by his full realization of the fact that God was for him, and was more than all that could be against him. Dear friends, Paul's confidence may be ours in great measure if we patiently follow him, even as he followed Christ.

The battle is the Lord's. We ourselves are not sufficient to accomplish anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. The Israelites of old made the mistake of thinking that the battle was theirs, and that success lay in themselves. We know their miserable failure. The battle was the Lord's then, and the battle is the Lord's now; but we are permitted to be vessels of his mercy in the struggle, and vessels unto his glory. If, by his grace, we finally prove ourselves to be overcomers, we shall gladly ascribe all the praise and glory to him who called us, supplied all our needs, and *assured* us of success.

We must not imagine that we cannot be overcomers till the end of our course, when all the sum of our Christian experience will be brought to bear, and we would expect to hear the "Well done, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." That is not all that concerns our overcoming. To be overcomers, we must meet the great problem of every present Christian experience. This thought is expressed by Jesus: "Be thou faithful unto death." Note. Not *at* death, but *unto* death. Again, "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved,"—not *at* the end but *unto* the end.

We must, then, meet the problems of present experience whether they be trials through affliction, or trials through pleasant things. There is an education going on all the time, and the education brings increased responsibility. Even the pleasant experiences of our Convention are to us opportunities to overcome, by bringing forth *fruit* as the result of Spiritual fellowship. We must be overcomers all the time, for if we are not, then we are to some extent at least being overcome. We must make progress, or we will go back. We may likening ourselves to a man in a small boat pulling against the stream. The stream against which we pull is a three-fold one—the flesh, the world, and the Devil. We must pull against these all the time and make progress, for we cannot stand still. If

we rest our oars for a while, our three-fold stream is bound to carry us back.

To overcome is to gain the victory in some great contest. It is to conquer. But we are to be "*more* than conquerors" in all our experiences. How can that be? In this way, each time we overcome in some trial, we gain strength to battle with the next experience. We are thus more than conquerors even from the world's point of view, for those of the world *lose* strength through gaining a victory. In the world many victories are gained only when the conqueror is at the point of collapse; and it is well known that indulgence in contests of strength or endurance wear out the vitality. On the contrary, *we*, as New Creatures, gain strength in each contest by overcoming; as the Psalmist declares of us:—"They go from strength to strength, every one of them appearing in Zion before God" (Psa. 84: 7).

The Apostle Paul gives many illustrations of the Christian's course, each of which is intended to teach, from various view-points, how diligent we must be if we would prove overcomers. He gives the illustration of a foot-race, saying, "They that run in a race, run all, but one obtaineth the prize;—so run that ye may obtain." It is the prize-winner who is our copy. We must strive for the prize with all the energy he displayed. A second illustration the Apostle brings before us is the fighting contest. Paul must have witnessed a contest of this kind and had evidently learned a lesson from it, which he desired to pass on to us. It is the value of hitting aright. Paul says he did not "beat the air." No, he had learned to direct his blows. Thus he writes: "I browbeat my body, and make it subservient; lest possibly having proclaimed to others, I myself should become one unapproved" (1 Cor. 9: 27). To be an overcomer, then, it is necessary that we should learn the science of blows, so that we may not "beat the air," nor our brethren, but, like the great Apostle, beat the right man, keep our *own* body under.

A third illustration is that of a wrestler in a hard encounter. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against rulers of darkness, against Spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto yourselves the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6: 12). In a wrestling contest the secret of success is to get the right grip. Once get the proper grip, and the contest is decided. Now the lesson which the Apostle would teach us seems to be this: Get thoroughly covered with the whole armour of righteousness, and our enemies will be unable to get any hold upon us. "Not having mine own righteousness." Ah no! That would give our enemies a splendid grip; but—"the righteousness which is of God by Faith."

In these illustrations the Apostle does not tell us what our contest is for, but gives them rather to aid us to overcome. What is our contest for? Why, some may say, the Kingdom. Yes, but what must *precede* the Kingdom? It's righteousness, personal holiness. It is not alone sufficient that we have the Lord's righteousness as our covering or armour. Under that covering we must fight the good fight of faith, perfecting holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Peter writes: "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy;" and we have the words of Jesus; "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." The Apostle John tells us that "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." The typical priesthood of Israel furnishes us with a good illustration of this. God separated those priests, that through them he might bless the people. They were his chosen channels for mercy and blessing, doing a mediating work between God and Israel. This was for the object of foreshowing his purpose in calling the Antitypical Priesthood, our Lord Jesus Christ and his Church, that through them he might dispense his mercy or favour to all mankind in the Millennial Age. But in addition to this and in order to accomplish it, God separated his Priesthood, that in them he might exhibit the perfection of his holiness. We therefore find that the High Priest's garments were garments "for glory and beauty," and that on his forehead was the inscription "Holiness to the Lord." We are privileged to be of the antitypical priesthood, and personal holiness is one of the chief things for which we are striving.

Suppose we now ask, What will help us to be overcomers? While we have seen that God will supply all our needs, we must on our part see that we put that supply into use, and so make it effective. First, then, a real *desire* to be an overcomer would help us. We must hold back nothing from the altar of sacrifice, however dear it may be to the flesh, but must make a full consecration. Then we must have a real *love* for all that is pure and good, and we must have so great an appreciation of the overcoming character, as to make it more to be desired than gold. It will greatly help us, also, not merely to *desire*, but to *will* to be an overcomer. You remember how Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat. That is the secret. We must have the desire and the will behind it, and the purpose in our heart to be overcomers; but more, dear friends, we must *want* to have a character like our Lord Jesus

Christ's; to be made a copy of God's dear Son.

To know ourselves, will also help us. To apply the searchlight of Truth and the quickening power of the Spirit within. Then the knowledge of God will help us. To *know* God. Not to know about him but to have that experience with his Son which brings to us a true knowledge of the Father. We require also to know Jesus, to have tasted that the Lord is gracious, whom having not seen we love, that we might by the eye of faith look unto him who is the author and finisher of our faith,—to consider him lest we be wearied and faint in our mind.

A knowledge of the Word of God is not only helpful, but necessary. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" is the Apostle's injunction. Why? Because it will teach and admonish. We need the Word for cleansing—"washing by the word." It can also be used as a mirror, which, if rightly arranged, will reflect the Lord's glory. At the same time it will reveal our own imperfection, and by this means we may be transformed into his image, from glory to glory.

It was through the knowledge of the Word of God that Jesus proved himself the overcomer in the wilderness. "It is written," was the end of all argument with the Devil; and so it must be with us. When under special trials or tests, we must remember that: *the Word is written for our special help.*

There are some things it is not necessary for us to overcome, some things in which we are not even to seek to be overcomers. Certain of these are referred to in Paul's first letter to Timothy (6: 4–6), —The proud, "those doting [margin sick] about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings, etc., from such withdraw thyself." Again, referring to the riches of this world, Paul says that they who desire these riches "fall into temptation and a snare . . . But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. 6: 9–11). We are also exhorted to flee fleshly lusts which war against the soul (life), to abstain from the lower cravings of the flesh.

In Rom. 12: 20 we read: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good;" while in James 4: 7 we read: "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." Surely, then, we need to be watchful in our endeavour to be overcomers, so that we will not resist those upon whose heads we should heap coals of fire, nor entertain those whom we ought to resist. In James 4: 7 we get what seems to be the principle of overcoming,—Submission to God, and resistance to the Devil.

Now we come to the things we must overcome in order to share in the Kingdom. The three great forces from which come our trials and tests, are (1) the flesh, that which lies closest to us; (2) the world, that which lies all around us; (3) the Devil, the power of the air. How are we to meet these? Shall we beat about the air, striking at anything or at nothing in particular? No, but as we have already said, the Lord has taught us the science of warfare, so that all may be done orderly and calmly. First, then, we have the flesh, with all its cravings and desires seeking to be realized. How is it to be met? The Apostle gives us the Key—"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5: 16). "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk." By walking, thinking, speaking and acting in the Spirit, we overcome the flesh and its desires.

In addition to the flesh we have to fight against the world, with all its glitter and show, its offers of fame, fortune, and applause. How shall we resist the world? By the Spirit again? Well, yes; but a particular operation of the Spirit, *viz., Faith.* "This is that which overcometh the world, even your faith." Faith grasps the exceeding great and precious promises of God, the unseen, yet eternal, things, enabling us to live above the things of the world. *In* the world but not *of* it, is the way Jesus put the matter. It was through *Faith* that the elders obtained a good report (Heb. 11: 2). It was Faith that enabled Abraham to become a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land which was not his own, dwelling in tents: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And so it is with us. It is only by the power of faith, faith in God and in his Word, that we may hope to overcome the world.

Then we have the third great force for evil, the Devil, that wily foe spoken of as "the prince of darkness," and yet capable of transforming himself into an angel of light; the adversary of God, and the accuser of the brethren. How are we to meet him? With a strong resistance, writes James, and with the complete protection of the armour of Righteousness, writes Paul. If he attacks the head, we have the helmet of salvation. If the body, the vital parts, we have the breastplate of righteousness. If he attacks the feet, we have the sandals of the preparation of the gospel of peace. Then, in order that we might have a shield of Faith and our arm free to use it for our protection, we must be girt about with Truth; and, lastly, the Word of the Spirit, not an offensive, so much as a defensive, weapon. There, then, stands the Christian warrior,

enabled to withstand, even in the evil day; and having overcome all, to *stand.* In whose righteousness is he to conquer? In his own? No. "Not mine own" as the Apostle said, but "the righteousness of God" (as represented in the Christian armour), which is through the faith of Christ, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. A complete covering. (1 Cor. 1: 30). "His raiment is my glorious dress."

And now, dear friends, we do not need to let appearances or feelings disquiet or cause us to be discouraged. Daniel did not appear to be the overcomer when King Darius caused him to be shut up in the lions' den. A stone was fixed at the mouth of the den, and sealed with the King's signet and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. To all appearance the presidents, governors, and princes, the counsellors and the captains of Darius, overcame Daniel. But what were the facts, dear friends? The morning declared it. The King spent a sleepless night, and was there early next morning with a lamentable voice enquiring for Daniel's safety. Then answered the overcomer. "Oh, King, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut up the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me, forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, Oh King, have I done no hurt." Then the record shows that the King commanded the persecutors of Daniel to be cast into the lions' den, and the lions had mastery over them in the morning. The powers of evil, dear friends, may appear to have the mastery now, but it is only appearances of victory. "The upright shall have the dominion in the morning."

"My closing exhortation is, "Consider him who bore the contradictions of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your mind. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Remember that all chastening is for our profit, that it may yield in us the peaceable fruit of righteousness, and that we may be partakers of our Father's holiness. Jesus was the great overcomer, tempted in all points, yet without sin. By looking unto him, the author and finisher of our faith, considering well how he overcame in all his trying experiences, we will be helped to share in his triumph. Remember his cheerful word of promise to us—"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16: 33).

These are a few of the many exceeding great and precious promises to the overcomers, for their help and encouragement. Rev. 2: 11,—"Not hurt of the second death." Why, we would ask, is the Second Death in the Church's zone? Yes, even as was Israel's first-born, typically, on that night before leaving Egypt; but who, through the sprinkling of the precious blood, escaped unhurt. Wonderful promises are these; and finally, our text,—"To him that overcometh to him will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my father in his throne." This is surely the crowning promise. To sit and share with our Redeemer and Lord in his Kingdom, even as he sits and shares with his Father (and *our* Father) in His Kingdom!

Equip me for the war, and teach me how to fight.
My mind and heart, Oh Lord, prepare, and guide
my words aright.
Control my every thought; my talents all enlist;
And may my zeal, to judgment brought, prove
true beneath thy test. AMEN.

The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet.

(By Brother J. HEMERY.)

THE "Seventh Trumpet" is otherwise known in Scripture as "the trump of God," "the last trump," "the great trumpet." It is the culmination of a series of sounds or messages from God, and, as these designations indicate, it is in the days of its sounding by the seventh angel that the mystery of God will be finished. We do not expect the physical heavens to be rent with the sound of a trumpet advising us that the last days are upon us. The six previous trumpets of Revelation have not thus rent the air, but have nevertheless accomplished their work as messages from God, and have been heard by those who had "ears to hear." As we believe that we are in the days of the seventh angel's trumpet, we do well to listen to the last grand message of the Age, to get all the Truth now due.

The first intimation of the import of the seventh trumpet is given in the type of the feast of trumpets (Lev. 23: 1-23). This feast was observed on the first day of Israel's seventh month, the first day indeed of their *civil* year. The day was a holy convocation, and was kept as a Sabbath. The trumpet's sound came up before God "as a memorial." It reminded Israel of their covenant with God, and it was a reminder to God of his promises in that covenant. This day of blowing of trumpets was also a culmination of a series. On each first day of the month, Israel's priests were ordered to blow with the trumpet over their daily sacrifices (Num. 10: 10), but when the seventh month came round there was trumpet blowing throughout the day, and special sacrifices were offered (Num. 29: 1-6).

That God intended a double meaning in these things seems clear, for while the trumpets were to remind Israel of their dependence upon their God, none the less God intended by these types to show forth glorious things to come. The account in Numbers 10: 1-10 of the use to which the trumpets were to be put, shows how God taught the people to depend upon him. When the people prepared for war, and were ready to march, before the expedition was started they were to blow with their trumpets;—and this came up before God as a memorial, that they might be saved from their enemies. No doubt the trumpet sound served instead of a prayer, which certainly could not have been heard by all the army. A sweet connection is provided by Luke's account of the angel's message to Cornelius—"thy prayers and thy alms are come up for a *memorial* before God" (Acts 10: 4).

Following the type, we may expect that *the great trumpet of the seventh angel will be sounded by the Lord's people*, and that whilst it is specially the Lord's message, it is nevertheless being blown by those who are reminding him of his covenant. As already intimated, the events happening during the sounding of the seventh trumpet are those which bring to a conclusion the work of the Gospel Age, and which introduce the kingdom of heaven.

The seventh month was probably the most important of Israel's year. On the 10th day of the month came the great Day of Atonement, the one day in the year when their high priest entered into the Most Holy with the blood of the bullock, and with that of the Lord's goat to make atonement for himself and for all the people. On this day they were reminded of their sins, and that the blood of their many sacrifices did not serve to satisfy justice; and, appropriately, on this day they were to afflict their souls. It was a most solemn occasion; and so particular was God that no distraction should divert their minds from the solemnity of their position as sinners needing atonement, that the injunction to abstain from all manner of work was repeated five times in as many verses (see Lev. 23: 27-32).

Following the Day of Atonement sacrifices and cleansing, there came on the fifteenth day the feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel gathered together and kept the feast for eight days. This was a special time of rejoicing, for now they had gathered in all the fruits of the land, having received at the

Lord's hand the full reward of their labours. *In this same month on every fiftieth year and on the Day of Atonement, there was blown the Jubilee trumpet,* the sounding of which brought joy to the thousands of Israel, who rejoiced one with another in the restitution which the Jubilee brought them. With these important events occurring—affliction, cleansing, atonement, the joy of a completed harvest, the feast of Tabernacles, and twice a century the Jubilee,—no wonder that God ordained that the entrance of this month should be trumpeted throughout the land!

In the same way, and in great measure correspondingly, the great Seventh trumpet calls attention,

(1), to the making of the great Atonement, proclaiming its accomplishment;

(2), to the time of the great antitypical Jubilee when the Times of Restitution for the world have come; and

(3), that the great feast of Tabernacles is at hand, when all the tribes of the earth shall rejoice before the Lord.

"The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The Kingdom (or sovereignty) of this world has become that of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever . . . And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth" (Rev. 11: 15-18). Here is a graphic account of the beginning of the times of restitution, when power will be taken away from those who have had it and have misused it, and when God will not only reward his servants, but will begin that righteous judgment which will bless the earth (Psa. 98: 8, 9). At this time the "temple of God is opened," and the ark of the Covenant seen—evidently meaning that a clearer insight into the deep things of God is now due (Rev. 11: 19).

It is at this same time that the great trumpet of Isa. 27: 13 will be blown, the restitution trumpet which will bring Israel back into their ancient inheritance—"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river into the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." This same trumpet will wake the sleeping saints (1 Cor. 15: 52), and will gather the living saints to each other and to the Lord (Matt. 24: 31). It also announces the return of the Lord for the accomplishment of this work (1 Thess. 4: 16).

As we have seen, one of the important events which closely followed the feast of trumpets was the feast of Tabernacles. The importance of the typical significance of this feast has not been fully appreciated. It was the third of the three great feasts when all the males of Israel had to meet together. The first was Passover, on the 14th day of the first month, followed by the feast of unleavened bread from the 15th to the 21st; the second, Pentecost, exactly 50 days after the 16th day of the first month; and then, four and a half months later, came Tabernacles (Lev. 23: 4, 15-34). Each had a relation to Israel's harvests—at Passover, on the 16th day of the first month, a sheaf of the first-fruits, a handful of ears of corn, was waved before the Lord (Lev. 23: 10, 11); at Pentecost the wheat and barley were garnered and two loaves of finely milled flour were waved before the Lord; they were "the first-fruits unto the Lord" (Lev. 23: 17). But Tabernacles was kept when all the fruits of the earth, the figs, pomegranates, peaches, dates and grapes had been gathered in (Lev. 23: 39).

Now, it is clear that the Passover is related to the Church. The Lord passed on the symbol to us, and we keep the *feast,* and remember his blood "till he come." Pentecost also is connected with the Church. It was when the 50th day was fully come that the Church, as the two wave loaves, was waved before the Lord by the High Priest and was found acceptable to God. In the type, there was a special instruction that the two loaves were to be baked with leaven (corruption); in the antitype, the Church was waved and accepted even though there was still the old leaven of indwelling sin. Our duty has been to purge out the old leaven, and to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (1 Cor. 5: 7; 2 Cor. 7: 1). The Feast of Tabernacles does not prefigure any feature of the Church's history or experience, but is a type of the great ingathering of God's harvest when all the nations of the earth will come before him in adoration; and when God will tabernacle with men (Rev. 21: 3; Psa. 86: 8, 9). In these types, then, are shown the ingatherings of the Lord's harvests—(1), Our Lord, the handful of corn, waved on the 16th day of the first month, his resurrection day; (2), the Church, waved at Pentecost as a kind of first-fruits; (3), and then, long after, but in due time, the great feast of Tabernacles when the earth will yield its fulness to the Lord.

Thus this feast of Tabernacles with its special

typical features was heralded by the blowing of the seventh trumpet of Israel's year. When the antitypical trumpet will sound, the sovereignty of the world will pass over to our Lord; and *that day* will have come for which the Church has so long and ardently prayed—"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven."

We ask, why is that time of happiness and of the exaltation of the name of God so long delayed? Why has the loving heart of God not moved him to effect the world's deliverance before now? It is to help us to understand his plans and purposes, and that we may fully comprehend his designs, that God has given us so much help by these types of the feasts and trumpets. Still, year by year, we remember our Passover, slain for us; and continue to eat his flesh. The Passover *night* is not yet over, nor will it be till the Church has passed beyond the vail. Nor is the *feast* of Passover yet passed. We still eat the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The Passover showed how the first-born were to be separated to God, by dying to their earthy inheritance; and God's Church of the first-born are still dying to their earthy inheritance, reckoned to them through the ransom of their Lord.

Nor is Pentecost yet passed. God is still accepting those whom he first drew to Christ, and who, by his grace, consecrate themselves to him. These are first-fruits unto God and the Lamb, a kind of first-fruits, as the Apostle James has it. Many amongst us realize the fact that God has graciously accepted us as a wave-offering upon the hands of our Lord. The Holy Spirit is still communicated to these, begetting them to the Divine Nature, and transforming their minds from the things of this world to conformity to Divine things.

The Feast of Tabernacles cannot come till Passover and Pentecost are passed. The world cannot get its blessing till God has fully called out the Church.

But there is a further lesson in the type. The feast of Tabernacles came after the Day of Atonement, and very appropriately so. God could not be at one with the people till they were cleansed from their sins; but when they were thus typically cleansed he manifested his pleasure in them by the institution of this Feast. If, then, we again ask why the antitypical feast, the restitution of the world, with the manifestation of God's reconciliation has not yet come, the answer is, plainly, *The Day of Atonement sacrifices are not yet complete—and God cannot accept the world in its unrighteous condition.* This brings us to the centre of the Plan of Salvation—the fact of Atonement, and the method of its accomplishment. We understand that, just as the Passover night represents the whole of the Gospel Age, and just as the 50th day represents the continued Pentecost, the day of consecration, the acceptable day of the Lord (1 Cor. 6: 1, 2), so the Day of Atonement, the 10th day of Israel's seventh month, represents the whole Gospel age when God is accepting sacrifices on behalf of the Priests and the People. It is but reasonable to suppose that if the sacrifice of our Lord made at Calvary had, on his acceptance with the Father, been applied on behalf of the world, there would immediately have followed the manifestation of his pleasure in it. No such manifestation has been made; and the only explanation which is given to us is conveyed through the type of the Day of Atonement sacrifices, where first there is shown the sacrifice of the bullock for the Priest's house (Levi), and then of the goat for the people. Now, our Lord has surely applied his blood for the Church, his people; and these he is sacrificing as the goat class (Rom. 12: 1, and 6: 3), which sacrifice will be accepted on behalf of the people; not, indeed, because of the intrinsic merit of the Church, but by reason of the Church being an acceptable sacrifice in Christ. When this sacrifice of the Church has been completed and accepted, then the arrangements for the reconciliation of the world will be due, and will be brought to completion. Then there will be such a manifestation of the loving kindness of God to Israel and to the world, as will accomplish the promises of God given through the prophets of Israel.

A further proof that the antitypical Day of Atonement is not yet over, is the fact that Israel is still in the affliction which came upon them when they, with cruel hands, slew their Lord. Of all the days of the year, the tenth day of the seventh month was the only one on which they were commanded to afflict themselves. This day was to be given up to a remembrance of their sins, and their need of the mercy of God, and of the provision he had made for their atonement or covering. When Israel crucified our Saviour, they said: Let his blood be upon us and our children (Matt. 27: 25); and that curse, called down upon themselves, is upon them to this day; nor can it be lifted till this long day's sacrifices are completed. What a pitiable lot is Israel's, in a cast-off condition waiting for their "hope," and knowing not "how long!" But what a favoured lot is ours, permitted and invited to take upon ourselves the way of sacrifice, that we may share with the Lord on behalf of his chosen people after the flesh —"Through your mercy they shall obtain mercy" (Rom. 11: 31).

Another feature, mentioned before, which was introduced by the seventh trumpet, was the trumpet

of Jubilee. This was indeed the trumpet of freedom, of restitution, of home-coming, of general rejoicing throughout Israel, and of rest. At the sounding of this trumpet every debt was cancelled, every slave was freed, a grand foreshowing of the time when God will break the bonds of sin, having effected the ransoming of those sold under sin through "the lamb which was slain." Now, *it was on the Day of Atonement that the Jubilee trumpet was blown* (Lev. 25: 9). Sometime during that day, and before the "affliction" was over, the jubilee was proclaimed. Here, then, is a beautiful type. Carried forward to its antitype it tells us that the Jubilee trumpet, proclaiming liberty to the captives, the coming of the King and the Kingdom, will begin to sound before the great Day of Atonement is over. Now, if the sin-offering sacrifices were finished when our Lord died on Calvary, or when he presented himself in heaven, the question comes, when, and by whom, was the trumpet of Jubilee sounded, and in what manner did it sound? It is true that the proclamation of the gospel brought deliverance from sin, but it did not bring the Antitypical Jubilee or "times of restitution" to Israel, nor to the world —which the Jubilee-trumpet message *will* do. This message of Restitution is not for the Church, just as in the type it was not for the priests. *It was not until the present Harvest message came that the Antitypical Jubilee trumpet began to sound.* We know that the "Times of Restitution" cannot come till the "Times of the Gentiles" are fulfilled; and, therefore, we know that the sound of the Jubilee trumpet cannot reach Israel and the world till about the close of those Gentile Times. But with the coming of the Harvest message came the blowing of the trumpet of Jubilee, and "blessed is the people which know the joyful sound" (Psa. 89: 15,—the Hebrew of "joyful sound"—*terooaw*, is translated "Jubilee" in Lev. 25: 9; see 1 Cor. 14: 8).

As yet, only those who are Israelites indeed have discerned its note amongst the many sounds now going forth. These, having heard, are privileged to blow the trumpet; to say to Zion, Thy God reigneth, and to prepare the way of the people that they may return to Zion to obtain joy and gladness (Isa. 35: 10). Here, then, dear Brethren, is strong confirmation of Brother Russell's teaching in "Tabernacle Shadows," showing that the great Day of Atonement sacrifices are not yet over. The Jubilee trumpet has begun to sound—since 1874 (Acts 3: 20, 21),—and as it must be sounded on the Day of Atonement, and was not sounded previously, *it follows that it is being sounded while yet the making of Atonement progresses.* Let none misunderstand us as if we said the *Ransom* progresses. The Ransom was gained at Calvary; and the work now going forward is the effect of that. How gracious of God to show us the real place and use of the sacrifice we are permitted to make! We serve all the better, when *heart* and *mind* rejoice together.

We have heard the joyful sound. We discern the seventh angel's message. We rejoice because the time of our deliverance draws nigh, and because the kingdom with its blessings is at hand. Very soon God will make *all* men hear his message; then there will be, on a grand scale, those events which were foreshown by the terrors of Sinai. God gave the Law to Israel "on the third day in the morning" in circumstances which brought terror to the hearts of the people; even Moses said "I exceedingly fear and quake." Blackness and darkness covered Sinai. Terrible thunderings shook the air. The lightnings' vivid flashes increased the terror of the scene; while at the same time the mountain was "altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." Then in the midst of these terrifying sounds and sights, out of the darkness and clear above the noise of the thunder, there sounded "the voice of the trumpet, exceeding loud, so that all the people in the camp trembled. It sounded long and waxed louder and louder." As the noise of the storm increased, so also did the sound of the trumpet. No wonder the people feared! (Exod. 19: 16-19.)

Soon, now, in this Millennial morning, God will again manifest his power. In symbol, the people will be gathered before Mount Zion—the power of the kingdom. There will be the thunderings, the lightnings, the voices which reveal the fact of God's interference with the affairs of this world; and *clear above all will be discerned the sounding of the great trumpet of truth* declaring the setting up of his Kingdom. This trumpet's message will continue to sound forth and grow louder and louder till all the kingdoms of the world are broken up, and till all men see and acknowledge the righteous requirements of God.

Dear Brethren, the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet having reached *our* ears, it is our glad privilege to "sound the message forth." Since it began to sound, we have seen more clearly than seemed possible before, the work of the great Day of Atonement. We know the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles, and the sounding of Jubilee. Let us see to our sacrifice being completed by being "faithful unto death," that we may share in bringing to Israel and the world the blessings declared by the Seventh Trumpet. AMEN.

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